

4 killed in Bolan accident
F.P. Report
QUETTA: A tragic traffic accident in the Bolan district of Balochistan has left four people dead and thirty others injured, casting a shadow of grief over the region. The tragic incident occurred near Dosa Chowki on the Quetta-Sindh National Highway, where a passenger coach traveling from Sadiqabad to Quetta overturned, resulting in the fatalities and injuries.

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Earthquake jolts Zhob
F.P. Report
ZHOB: An earthquake with a magnitude of 4.4 jolted Zhob and its adjoining areas in Balochistan. The epicenter of the earthquake was in south-east of from Zhob and the tremors were recorded at a depth of 40 kilometres. People came out of their houses in fear by reciting Kalma-e-Tayyaba. However, no loss of life or damage to property was reported from any part of Khuzdar so far.

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PM, Tajikistan's leader review bilateral cooperation

DUSHANBE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon Thursday reviewed bilateral cooperation in different areas, including political, trade, economy, energy, defence, security, and regional connectivity.

During the bilateral meeting, they agreed to actively pursue new avenues for cooperation, with a focus on fostering investment opportunities, enhancing educational linkages, prompting cultural exchanges, advancing information technology collaboration and strengthening people-to-people contacts. Earlier upon arrival at Qasr-e-Millat, the President welcomed the Prime Minister and the accompanying delegation.

At the invitation of Government of Tajikistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived here to participate in the International High-Level Conference on 'Glaciers' Preservation (ICGP) being held on 29-31 May, 2025. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising the Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi, and senior officials.

Upon arrival at Dushanbe, he was received by the Prime Minister of Tajikistan Qohir Rasulzoda. During the meeting, the Prime Minister and the Tajik President held in-depth and wide-ranging discussions covering various aspects of bilateral cooperation, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest.

During the discussions, they fondly recalled the signing of historic Strategic Partnership Agreement during the Prime Minister's visit to Dushanbe in July 2024, which laid a strong foundation for strengthening bilateral relations and advancing shared interests. Reaffirming the fraternal ties existing between the two countries marked by shared history, culture and geography, the leaders expressed satisfaction with the ongoing cooperation and resolved to elevate the strategic cooperation to a new level, for the mutual benefit of the two countries and peoples. On CASA-1000, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to positioning it as a pivotal project for regional integration. Welcoming the holding of CASA-1000 Inter-Governmental Council in Dushanbe on 15 May 2025, the Prime Minister assured the shared commitment to its early operationalization.

Regarding economic cooperation, the two leaders, acknowledging the untapped potential in bilateral trade, underscored the importance

Pakistan ready for \$2b Azerbaijan investment for mutual benefits: Shehbaz

LACHIN (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan was ready to receive \$2 billion investment from Azerbaijan in multiple sectors. The prime minister, talking to Azerbaijan TV prior to his departure from Lachin to Dushanbe after winding up his three-day visit, said that during their meeting, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev had reiterated his country's commitment to invest \$2 billion in Pakistan. "Yesterday, President Ilham Aliyev again reiterated his commitment to invest \$2 billion in Pakistan. We are ready for this investment for mutual benefits," he said. Referring to his participation in a ceremony of Azerbaijan's Independence Day held on Wednesday, the prime minister said that May 28 was also a very important day for Pakistan as the country became a nuclear power on that date in 1998. He said Azerbaijan was a "brotherly and great" country which had completely transformed under the "dynamic" leadership of President Ilham Aliyev. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that during their meeting, both sides discussed joint cooperation in trade, commerce and investment. In the future, both countries will have more coordination in commerce, defence production, education, health and many other sectors.

On UN Peacekeepers Day, Premier for safer, more effective missions

LACHIN (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday urged the international community to assess the challenges faced by UN peacekeeping forces, reaffirming Pakistan's steadfast commitment and support for all efforts aimed at strengthening UN peacekeeping missions. "This day provides an appropriate opportunity to assess the challenges faced by UN peacekeeping forces, such as rising unilateralism, financial constraints, increasing threats to the safety and security of UN peacekeepers, misinformation campaigns targeting UN peace operations, and the impacts of emerging technologies," he said in his message on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers being observed today. "He said that the Day not only served as a reminder of the sacrifices made by UN peacekeepers in the pursuit of international peace and security but also acknowledged their vital role in creating a peaceful, stable, and prosperous world. He highlighted that during the last seven decades of UN peacekeeping history, over 235,000 Pakistani peacekeepers have served in 48 UN missions globally and a total of 181 Pakistani peacekeepers had sacrificed their lives for international peace and security. The prime minister, who is currently in Azerbaijan on the third leg of his four-country visit, called upon the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the policies of the United Nations in maintaining global peace and security, and to double efforts to adapt UN peacekeeping to meet these rapidly evolving challenges.

of actively pursuing new avenues of cooperation in line with the decisions taken during the 7th Session of Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific Technical Cooperation, held in Islamabad in December 2024. They also agreed to effectively leverage the existing institutional frameworks including twelve Joint Working Groups (JWGs), to further enhance collaboration between the two countries, especially in oil & gas and energy sectors. They took good note of growing bilateral cooperation in the field of defence & security and reiterated their resolve

to further boost the same in order to overcome the common security challenges faced by the two countries. They emphasized the need to enhance cooperation in counter-terrorism, combating cross-border organized crime and human and drug trafficking. The leaders also exchanged perspectives on regional and global geopolitical developments. They emphasized the importance of working together to promote peace, stability, and economic development in the region.

(Continued on Back Page)



DUSHANBE: President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon shaking hands with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif upon arrival at Palace of Nation.

Ashfaq named as Addtl Secy, Info Ministry



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Recently promoted to Grade 21and senior officer of the Information Group, Ashfaq Ahmad Khalil, has been appointed as Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Establishment Division has also issued a notification in this regard.

He was earlier serving as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It is to be recalled that he has served on many important positions in the ministry. He had served as Regional General Manager, PEMRA Peshawar, Director General PR, PID Peshawar, Press Counselor Tokyo Japan and Director, External Publicity Wing.

Cops among 7 martyred in Bannu firing incidents

F.P. Report

BANNU: At least seven martyred including policemen in separate firing incidents in Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to police spokesperson, the firing incidents occurred in 24 hours also resulted in injuries to five citizens including policemen.

In response, police engaged the attackers, killing one terrorist while his accomplice managed to escape. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Sajjad Khan and District Police Officer (DPO) Saleem Abbas Kulachi visited the hospital to check on the injured officers, offering support and boosting their morale.

On April 22, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) police successfully thwarted a terrorist attack on the Dharey Pul police post in Bannu. According to the Central Police Office (CPO), the swift response by police personnel stationed at the post prevented the assault.

The CPO reported that a group of 18 to 19 terrorists, some riding eight motorcycles and others crawling toward the post, attempted a coordinated attack. The group, belonging to the Fitna al-Khawarij, aimed to target an IT camera as part of their planned assault. They opened fire on the police post from multiple directions, the CPO stated. Following a robust counter-response from the police, the attackers were forced to flee, unable to achieve their objective.

Pak will never leave Kashmir: Gen Asim



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), interacted with participants of 'Hilal Talks' at the Army Auditorium today. Spanning interactive sessions and group discussions on a range of international, regional and national issues, Hilal Talks are intended to act as a forum for perspective sharing among members of Pakistan's academic community.

As an acknowledgment of the critical role that academia plays in national progress, through innovation, research and in influencing perceptions, the forum brought together around 1800 members of the academic community, comprising Vice Chancellors, Heads of Departments, senior faculty members, principals and students from institutions across Pakistan; majority of whom participated in the Talks through virtual mediums. Special emphasis was on participation from southern districts in Balochistan, AJK and GB.

While addressing the participants, the COAS encouraged the academia to

play proactive role in promoting national narrative of harmony, stability, peace and progress. Emphasizing the need for critical thinking and imperatives of knowledge-driven economies, the COAS stated that our academic institutions must serve as centers for critical thinking, reasoning and organic innovative solutions for Pakistan's progress.

The COAS acknowledged the challenges being faced by higher education including in the field of research, and reiterated Army's commitment in supporting Government's initiatives to improve academic environment and promote innovative research.

After a candid Q&A session, participants appreciated the institution of 'Hilal Talks' and expressed confidence that such initiatives would significantly contribute in fostering an atmosphere for sharing ideas, open up avenues for research and innovation, and gradually strengthen national cohesion through sustained interaction. Forum concluded with a shared commitment to work together towards a more secure and prosperous Pakistan.

Four TTP terrorists killed, 2 cops martyred

F.P. Report

RAWALAKOT: Four terrorists associated with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), hiding in a cave were killed during a police operation in Rawalakot, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

According to SSP Rawalakot, Riaz Mughal, the police had received intelligence regarding the presence of terrorists in the forest area of Hussain Kot. Acting on the tip-off, police launched a raid during which the terrorists were found hiding in a

cave. As the police surrounded the cave and attempted to apprehend the suspects, one of the terrorists hurled a grenade at the officers, prompting retaliatory fire. In the exchange, all four terrorists were neutralized. SSP Mughal confirmed that two police officers — Gulzar and Tariq Bashir — were martyred in the operation.

The killed terrorists were identified as Zarnosh Naseem, his brother Gibran Naseem, a suspect named Ulfat, and one unidentified individual.



NEW YORK: Palestinian Ambassador weeping, during speech at UN Security Council on killing of children at Gaza.

7 terrorists killed, 4 jawans martyred

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Seven khwarij belonging to Indian proxy Fitna al Khwarij were killed in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

On night 28-29 May, Indian sponsored khwarij attempted to attack a Security Forces Check Post in general area Shawal, North Waziristan District. The attempt was effectively thwarted by own troops and in ensuing fire exchange, six Indian sponsored Khwarij were sent to hell.

However, during intense fire exchange, Lieutenant Danyial Ismail (age: 24 years, resident of District Mardan), a brave young officer who was leading his troops from front, fought gallantly and embraced Shahadat along with his three men. The three soldiers who paid ultimate sacrifice include Naib Subedar Kashif Raza (age: 42 years, resident of District Chakwal), Lance Naik Fiaqat Ali (age: 35 years, resident of District Haripur) and Sepoy Muhammad Hameed (age: 26 years, resident of District Abbottabad).

In another encounter that took place in Chitral District, security forces successfully neutralised one Indian sponsored khwarij. Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored khwarij found in the area as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of Indian sponsored terrorism from the country, and such sacrifices of our brave men further



strengthen our resolve.

President Asif Ali Zardari paid tribute to the security forces for carrying out two different successful operations against the Indian proxy Fitna al-Khawarij in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He lauded the security forces for killing seven Khawarij in the operations. He paid tribute to four Jawans for embracing martyrdom during the operation in North Waziristan.

He praised the patriotism and bravery of Lieutenant Danyial Ismail, Naib Subedar Kashif Raza, Lance Naik Fiaqat Ali and Sepoy Muhammad Hameed. He commended the brave sons of the nation for sacrificing their lives. He said the brave forces were carrying out successful operations for eliminating the Indian proxy Fitna al-Khawarij.

The President reiterated the resolve to continue operations till complete eradication of terrorism from the country. The whole nation was with the security forces in the war against terrorism, he added. He prayed for the elevation of

rank of the martyrs in Jannah and for grant of fortitude to the bereaved family members.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday appreciated the security forces for killing five terrorists of Fitna al-Hindustan patronized by India to perpetrate heinous activities in Balochistan. He praised the professional capabilities of security forces for killing four terrorists in Loralai for their involvement in different incidents to create law and order situation in Balochistan.

These terrorists were among those responsible for martyring 30 people at N-70 highway. He lauded the officers and Jawans of armed forces of Pakistan for exterminating one more terrorist involved in carrying out acts of terrorism under the patronage of India in the Kech district. He said the armed forces of Pakistan were busy day and night for completely wiping out Indian proxy terrorists. The whole nation stood with its armed forces in the war against terrorism, he added.

CM inaugurates KP-EZDMC Tower



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur Thursday visited head office of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC) on Thursday and formally inaugurated newly established KP-EZDMC Tower.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by provincial cabinet members Abdul Karim Tordher, Tufail Anjum, and Dr. Muhammad Israr, secretary Industries Aamir Afag, officials from the Industries Department, KPEZDMC and others. The KP-EZDMC Tower was constructed at a cost of Rs. 670 million over a period of three years. The tower spans a total area of four kanals and comprises seven floors.

Addressing the ceremony as the chief guest, the Chief Minister stated that the geographical location and natural resources of KP are of immense importance and there is a need to fully capitalize on them. He emphasized that by effectively harnessing the province's potential, economic self-sufficiency can be achieved.

The Chief Minister added that 11 economic zones have been established in the

province, work on four more economic zones is in progress and another four are in pipeline. "The provincial government is providing all necessary facilities and incentives to investors to promote maximum investment in the province," he added. He said there are immense opportunities for hydropower generation in the province. The government will supply electricity generated at lower rates to local industries, and for this purpose, it has initiated a plan to lay its own transmission line.

A new economic zone will be established in Katlang to make effective use of this transmission line. This project, he said, would be a game-changer and revolutionize the industrial sector of the province. The Chief Minister remarked that the environment for private investment in the province is extremely conducive. He invited investors from across the country to invest in the province and benefit from the facilities and incentives being provided by the provincial government.

He said that roadshows would be organized to inform investors about opportunities in the province adding that Industries are being promoted in different areas based on their specific

KP Cabinet meets Friday on 26 points agenda

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet is set to meet on Fry, May 30, under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. A statement from Assembly Secretariat on Thursday said, a 26-point agenda has been issued ahead of the meeting.

Key items on the agenda include the construction of the Bannu Janikhel Police Station and proposed amendments to recruitment policies for contract employees in the health department. The cabinet will also review proposed amendments to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Act and take up the annual report submitted by the Provincial Ombudsman.

Additional points under discussion include the procurement of two vehicles for anti-terrorism courts in Peshawar and Buner, as well as the transfer of land for the construction of a rescue station in Lakki Marwat. The meeting is expected to cover a wide range of administrative, legal, and developmental matters impacting various sectors across the province.

Educational neglect at Gul Maqam School Post of Headmaster vacant since 2 years

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The BPS-17 Headmaster position at Government High School Gul Maqam, Lower Dir, has been vacant since October 29, 2022. As a result, both academic activities and administrative operations at the school are being adversely affected.

Currently, the responsibilities of the headmaster are being handled by an SST teacher, who is already burdened with teaching

duties and now has to manage additional administrative tasks as well. This dual burden is impacting the performance of the teaching staff and having a negative effect on students' education.

Teachers and local residents have strongly urged the Department of Education to immediately appoint a permanent headmaster for the school. They emphasized that a stable administrative structure is essential for maintaining a

conducive learning environment and improving educational standards.

Community members stated that the prolonged delay is tantamount to neglecting the importance of education and is obstructing efforts to provide students with a quality academic setting. They warned that if the vacancy is not filled promptly, they will be forced to take protest action against the education authorities.

HRCP demands repeal of PECA Amend Act

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) today released a critical report urging the complete repeal of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) (Amendment) Act 2025, highlighting serious flaws in the legislation.

The report, presented by digital rights activist Fariha Aziz at an advocacy meeting, rejects any coercive application of the law's previous versions from 2016 and 2023. The report, produced under HRCP's Legislation Watch Cell, was unveiled during an event funded by the European Union. Director Farah Zia opened the meeting, stressing HRCP's concern over the recent surge of repressive laws, which she noted are being used to curtail civic spaces and suppress dissent and freedom of expression.

Authored by Ms Aziz, the report criticizes the law

for criminalizing ambiguous categories of 'fake and false information,' which carry penalties of up to three years' imprisonment. It also highlights the establishment of a powerful regulatory authority, complaints council, and tribunal, all under excessive executive control. The conversion of previously bailable and non-cognizable offences into non-bailable and cognizable ones is another significant concern, broadening the scope for coercive measures. The report also notes that the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency, which has replaced the Federal Investigation Authority, lacks adequate safeguards.

At the meeting, journalist Adnan Rehmat articulated the state's responsibility to protect individuals' rights, advocating for the decriminalization of free speech and calling for broad-based representation to engage with political

parties.

Journalist Saleem Shahid criticized the PECA (Amendment) Act for infringing on constitutional rights to free speech and information, urging journalists and civil society to unite in defending these freedoms. Former BNP-M legislator Sanaullah Baloch emphasized the importance of freedom of expression for a robust parliament.

HRCP co-chair Munizae Jahangir highlighted the hyper-regulated connectivity in Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan and the pressures faced by journalists in these areas and in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Journalist Asad Ali Toor shared his experience of having his family's bank accounts frozen, allegedly due to his work, which Ms Jahangir termed as 'economic terrorism'. Digital rights activists Usama Khilji and Aftab Alam proposed forming a national coalition of civil society members and journalists.

Arts council organizes book launch ceremony

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, hosted the book launch ceremony of renowned poet Khalid Hamidi's poetry collection "Soch" at the Haseena Moin Hall. The event began with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Presiding over the ceremony was literary scholar Professor Sahar Ansari, while distinguished writer Dr. Fatima Hasan participated as the chief guest.

The ceremony featured addresses from prominent literary figures, including Ambareen Haseeb Ambar, Dr. Mukhtar Hayat, Zahid Hussain Johri, Shakeel Khan, and Shoaib Nasir. Dr. Fatima Hasan presented an essay titled "Soch Ke Zaviye", in which she praised Khalid Hamidi's poetic depth and his sensitivity towards societal issues.

In his presidential address, Professor Sahar

Ansari stated, This book encapsulates the socio-political realities of Khalid Hamidi's era. In today's time of apathy and indifference, literature like Hamidi's becomes a necessity. He said: 'It's not enough to see what happens around us, it's essential to think and speak as well.' Khalid Hamidi truly mastered the art of verse.

Ambareen Haseeb Ambar highlighted Hamidi's influence on the younger generation, mentioning how his work even aids in developing proficiency in English." His poetry encourages readers not merely to dream but to reflect and awaken themselves. It is poetry that questions, ignites human consciousness, and fosters social awareness."

Zahid Hussain Johri noted that although Khalid Hamidi experienced migration, he chose not to write a traditional "muhajirnama" but instead portrayed the emotional trauma of the

migration of values."He carried the past with him while deeply contemplating the future." Dr. Mukhtar Hayat shared insights into Hamidi's personal life, stating Khalid Hamidi was a man of his words, fully devoted to his ideological pursuits. He avoided fruitless engagements and embodied humility, sincerity, and compassion.

Shoaib Nasir reflected on the emotional significance of the event, saying Gathering here for this book launch surely must have brought peace to Khalid Hamidi's soul. I'm thankful to Ahmed Shah for organizing this event with such warmth and care. I always knew Khalid Hamidi as a kind and affectionate friend. After the event, Director of Administration Shakeel Khan extended gratitude on behalf of the Arts Council to all speakers and attendees. The event was moderated by Khalid Moin.

Minister meets with key energy stakeholders

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, alongside key officials from the Ministry of Energy, visited Pakistan State Oil (PSO) House today to engage with pivotal energy stakeholders.

The visit aimed at fortifying collaboration and operational efficiency across the petroleum sector, underscoring the government's commitment to a sustainable and economical energy framework for the nation.

During the visit, Malik interacted with PSO's leadership, including Chief Supply Chain Officer

Abdus Sami and Chief Strategy and Technology Officer Mohsin Ali Mangi, reviewing the company's supply chain resilience and automation efforts. He acknowledged PSO's critical role in maintaining a steady fuel supply nationwide and its initiatives towards renewable energy expansion. Malik also assured government support for overcoming challenges faced by PSO and emphasized the importance of a reliable energy supply for consumers.

In discussions with the Oil Companies Advisory Committee (OCAC) and a separate meeting with the Petroleum Dealers Association, the Minister

focused on industry challenges, regulatory alignment, and operational issues faced by dealers. He assured all parties that their concerns would be addressed to ensure a stable energy supply chain and a balanced ecosystem serving consumer interests.

Malik articulated the government's vision for a resilient and innovative energy sector, highlighting the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to meet the nation's evolving energy needs. The visit reinforced a commitment to a people-centered energy framework, advancing fuel quality, reducing emissions, and supporting economic stability.

Punjab CM orders cut in roti prices

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz on Thursday directed that the price of roti be revised following the newly reduced flour rates. Chairing a high-level meeting on commodity prices, the Punjab CM ordered the Price Control Department to take immediate steps to revise roti rates.

Decline in flour prices must directly benefit the public through a corresponding reduction in roti prices, she added. Maryam Nawaz also directed for strict monitoring of the prices of chicken, vegetables, and lentils, underlining the impact of inflation on lower-income families.

"The child of a poor household used to afford chicken at least once a week — with soaring prices, even that has become impossible. I will not tolerate this," the Chief Minister said in Lahore. Punjab CM reaffirmed her commitment to bringing roti prices to a historic low and stressed that the relief from flour price cuts should be tangibly reflected in the daily lives of the underprivileged.

Last month, the Karachi administration announced new prices of wheat flour (Atta) in the city. According to a notification issued by Commissioner Karachi, the wholesale market price of fine wheat flour was fixed at Rs 78 per kilogram (kg) while it will be available at Rs 90 per kg in the retail market. Similarly, the price of chakki flour was fixed at Rs 90 per kilogram after a reduction of Rs 10.

Dacoit killed in encounter

F.P. Report

LAHORE: According to a spokesperson for the Crime Control Department (CCD), a dangerous wanted criminal was killed during a police encounter with Lahore police.

The notorious criminal, Sher, was considered a symbol of fear in the area, the CCD spokesperson added. Acting on a tip-off, the team raided a location within the jurisdiction of Kahna Police Station hoping to arrest the wanted suspect. However, upon the arrival of the police party, Sher and his accomplices opened fire on the officers.

According to the spokesperson, She was killed during the exchange of gunfire by bullets fired by his own accomplices. The suspect was wanted in over 78 serious criminal cases, including murder, attempted murder, armed encounters with police, robbery, shop robbery, and vehicle snatching.

In 2021, the suspect killed a citizen during a robbery in the area of Hair Police Station after the victim resisted. In 2023, he shot and killed a shopkeeper during a robbery in Nawab Town when the shop owner resisted. The other accomplices of the deceased suspect fled the scene while firing at the police and a search operation is underway to arrest the remaining wanted suspects, the CCD spokesperson confirmed. Meanwhile, according to police reports, a suspect in custody of CCD Sargodha was fired upon by unknown assailants near Chariyala area of Kharian.

Cheques distributed

F.P. Report

KHANEWAL: A total of Rs.3.68 million in compensation cheques was distributed among 15 people affected by the recent monsoon season, according to an official statement issued here on Thursday.

The financial assistance, provided by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, was handed over during a ceremony held here in committee room of the Deputy Commissioner's office. ADC (Revenue) Khalid Abbas Syal, presented the cheques to the families of those who lost their lives and others who suffered significant losses due to the devastating rains and subsequent flooding. Addressing the attendees, Syal extended condolences to the bereaved families and reaffirmed the district administration's commitment to supporting those impacted by the disaster.

DG inaugurates water filtration plant at FIA HQs

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Director General Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Raja Rifat Mukhtar inaugurated a water filtration plant at the FIA Headquarters in Islamabad. The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior officers and employees of the FIA, on Thursday.

The primary objective of installing the water filtration plant is to provide clean and safe drinking water to the officers and staff stationed at the FIA Headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, DG FIA Raja Rifat Mukhtar emphasized that initiatives aimed at improving the welfare and health of employees are a top priority for the agency.

DG FIA, Raja Rifat Mukhtar has been actively working on improving the agency's infrastructure and services.



Under his leadership, the FIA is expected to enhance its service deliv-

ery and tackle various challenges more effectively.

LUMHS teachers' association flays situation at Psychiatry institute

F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: The Executive committee of Teachers' Association of Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences (LUMHS) expresses its serious concern and condemnation over the unfolding situation at Sir Cowasji Jehangir Institute of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Hyderabad.

The administration and paramedical staff union has started the malicious campaign targeting the faculty members and Dr. Jamil Junejo, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, LUMHS. This campaign, executed through the misuse of the paramedics' union, aims to defame and intimidate faculty members who have been advocating for the lawful autonomy of the institute.

It is important to highlight the historic and ongoing contributions of the LUMHS faculty to psychiatric education and mental healthcare at

this institute. Esteemed senior psychiatrists such as Prof. Ibrahim Khalil and Prof. Hyder Ali G. Qazi served this institution with dedication and vision for decades. Since the initiation of postgraduate training in psychiatry at LUMHS in 2001, a total of 71 qualified psychiatrists have been trained—professionals who now serve across Sindh and Pakistan, greatly enhancing mental health services at the grassroots and tertiary levels.

This issue is not merely about institutional governance—it is about safeguarding the future of mental healthcare in Sindh. The continued defiance of legal mandates and the harassment of faculty members are directly harming psychiatric patients, many of whom are among the most marginalized and voiceless segments of our society.

The Teachers' Association of LUMHS stands united with the Department of Psychiatry in its

demand for justice, legal compliance, and the advancement of mental healthcare. We urge the Chief Minister of Sindh, the Health Minister of Sindh, and the Chief Secretary Sindh to: Take immediate action against the misuse of authority and baseless character attacks perpetrated by the current Medical Superintendent.

Provide institutional protection and respect for faculty members dedicated to public service and legal advocacy. Ensure full and immediate implementation of the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Institute of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Act, 2019, as mandated by law and upheld by the Supreme Court. It is time to recognize the service of our educators and clinicians, protect their dignity, and fulfill our responsibility to the people of Sindh by delivering quality psychiatric care based on professional autonomy, integrity, and lawful governance.

Violence against PPP KP workers played

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider said that he condemns the violence against PPP workers during a peaceful protest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will pay dearly for its strategy of direct confrontation with the people. Modi's historic humiliation and disgrace at the national and international levels will never be forgotten.

Everyone, including all political parties of the country, showed full solidarity with the Pakistan Army against India. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation from Wah Cantt at the Governor House, Lahore. The delegation included Chaudhry Arif Mahmood, former Vice

Chairman, Cantonment Board, Wah Cantt, Gulzar Ahmed, former President, POF Employees Cooperative House Building, Wah Cantt. Malik Rehmatullah, former Treasurer, POF Employees Cooperative House Building Society, Wah Cantt, Malik Naveed Hassan, (Site-in-Charge), P.O.F Society, Wah Cantt.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the success of Operation Banyan Marsus of the Pakistan Army against India under the leadership of the Army Chief is the guarantor of a safe Pakistan. He said that India's threat to weaponize water is utterly deplorable and poses a significant threat to regional stability. The Punjab Governor said that India will think a hundred times before com-

JI rejects hike in power tariff

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi chief, Munim Zafar Khan, has rejected the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority's (NEPRA) recent decision to increase K-Electric's tariff, describing it as "anti-Karachi."

In a letter addressed to the NEPRA chairman, Munim Zafar Khan condemned the move to pass K-Electric's recovery losses onto consumers, calling the decision "unjust and unacceptable." "It is outrageous to burden honest consumers with the losses caused by K-Electric's inefficiencies," he wrote. "We categorically reject this anti-Karachi decision."

Munim Zafar also accused NEPRA of a double standard, noting that while the average electricity rate in the rest of the country is around Rs35 per unit, Karachi residents are paying up to Rs40 per unit. "This discriminatory pricing reflects NEPRA's clear bias against the people of Karachi," he stated. He further criticized K-Electric for failing to provide uninterrupted power supply and blamed NEPRA for not fulfilling its constitutional duty to safeguard the rights of Karachi's consumers. Highlighting the ongoing issue of severe power outages amid intense heat, the JI Karachi chief condemned both NEPRA and the federal government for what he called their "criminal silence" on the issue.

ECP hosts seminar

F.P. Report

KASUR: The District Election Commissioner Office in Kasur hosted a voter awareness seminar on Thursday, aimed at educating citizens about the importance of voter registration and verification.

The event attended by professors, students and other guests, with District Election Commissioner Tanveer Ahmed Khan as the chief guest. ECP Kasur has launched a special campaign to register all eligible citizens as voters, ensuring they can exercise their democratic rights.

Citizens can check their voter information by sending an SMS to 8300 with their National Identity Card number. Voters can file claims for registration correction on Form No. 21 if there are any errors in their information.

Speeding dumper crashes into bungalow

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A speeding dumper crashed into a bungalow in Karachi, resulting in injuries to the driver and the cleaner. As per details, the dumper, loaded with construction debris, collided with a boundary wall of a bungalow near Defence Morr while en route to Punjab Colony.

Police stated that the impact caused damage to the bungalow's wall. The dumper driver has been taken into custody. The driver claimed that the accident occurred due to brake failure. Traffic police confirmed that both the driver and the cleaner sustained injuries in the crash and were shifted to a nearby hospital for medical

treatment.

The dumper horror continues as the giant vehicle claimed life of a wheelchair-bound man at Steel Mill Morr in Karachi, earlier this month. SSP Traffic Shoukat Ali Khatian stated that the handicapped man was struck by a dumper while attempting to cross the road.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam addressing the participants of the women boxing trials.

Govt promoting women sports under PM youth program: Amir Muqam

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Women's talent boxing trials were organized at Qayyum Sports Complex under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme. The initiative provided equal opportunities to players from Bannu, Mardan and Peshawar regions to showcase and refine their skills.

The event was graced by Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam, former Governor Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Zahid Hussain, Engineer

Arif Rawan and international athlete and Director Sports Shabana Khattak. Speaking on the occasion Minister Amir Muqam praised the programme noting that talented players are being discovered from across Pakistan from Karachi to Khyber, Waziristan, Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan.

He highlighted that the Higher Education Commission has created a comprehensive network to identify talent through universities and the Prime Minister's Youth Sports Programme is also reaching out to school, college and

university students, as well as those children who have missed out on formal education.

These children are also being provided full support and facilities.

He added that the presence of girls from diverse regions at the Boxing Arena Hall of Qayyum Sports Complex stands as clear evidence of the success of this talent hunt programme. He extended congratulations to the Vice Chancellor of Bacha Khan University and Director of Sports Shabana Khattak for their tireless efforts in organizing these successful trials.

Fazal chairs meeting to discuss animal movement control

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Livestock, Fisheries & Cooperative Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai chaired a meeting at the Civil Secretariat to address animal movement control and prevention of contagious diseases. Attendees included Provincial Assembly Member Sultan Room Khan, Secretary Livestock Fisheries & Cooperative Tahir Orakzai, Director General Livestock Extension Dr. Asaf Khan, Director General Livestock Research Dr. Ijaz Ali, Director Research Khuro Kaleem and relevant Livestock Department officials. Key decisions were finalized to prevent infectious disease spread among animals during Eid-ul-Adha. Provincial Minister Fazal Yousafzai directed immediate cancellation of leave for all veterinary staff until Eid-ul-Adha, with mandatory field deployment of district officers to enforce precautions. Check posts will be established near inter-provincial/district borders and animal markets for strict movement monitoring and compulsory disinfectant spraying on animals. Veterinary camps will operate in high-density livestock areas for timely diagnosis, treatment, and vaccination. Letters will be issued to Divisional Commissioners and law enforcement agencies seeking departmental cooperation. Provincial Minister Fazal Hakeem Yousafzai emphasized that mass animal movement during Eid poses significant epidemic risks, stating "Our government prioritizes public health above all." Additional measures include public awareness campaigns, improved sanitation, and immediate reporting of suspected cases.

Workshop on Gender-Responsive Budgeting concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): A three-day workshop on Gender-Responsive Budgeting organized in collaboration with UN Women Pakistan, UNDP and the European Union concluded at Provincial Assembly.

The concluding session was attended by Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Saleem Swati, Deputy Speaker, Suraiya Bibi. Members of the Provincial Assembly and representatives from partner organizations. Addressing the event, Speaker Babar Saleem Swati appreciated the efforts of UN Women, UNDP and other partners for supporting Provincial Assembly in promoting gender equality, providing equal opportunities for women, and assisting in key legislation. He highlighted the role of these institutions in passage and support of crucial laws such as the Domestic Violence Bill, inheritance rights, labor laws, elimination of the practice of "Ghag", development of SOPs for Dar-ul-Amans and formulation of Women Empowerment Policy for KP.

initiative included training for mountaineers, which aimed to successfully summit Tirich Mir.

He also announced the two-year royalty fee waiver for mountaineers, saying that this move was expected to attract climbers from around the world to Pakistan, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"KP is a province known for its hospitality," he said, adding that over 20 million tourists visited the region last year.

Carlo Alberto Pinelli while speaking at the event expressed his gratitude to the KP government and revealed plans to hold training sessions not only in Chitral but also in Swat. He highlighted the role of Mountain Wilderness International in providing global training to mountaineers.

The event was attended by ambassadors from various countries, men and women, tourism stakeholders and guests as well.

Member National Assembly Faisal Amin Khan Gandapur, KPCTA director General Habibullah Arif, Deputy Head of Mission, Norway, Thomas Dahr, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation Managing Director Aftab Rana, Mountain Wilderness International's Carlo Alberto Pinelli, mountaineers from KP, including Tayyab Syed and Abbas, who had nearly summited Tirich Mir in 1991 in a joint expedition with Japan but fell short by just 100 meters, were among the prominent attendees.

The MoU was signed by KPCTA DG Habibullah Arif and Carlo Alberto Pinelli, who had also been awarded the Nishan-e-Imtiaz.

Muzzammil Aslam praised the KPCTA for arranging the event and emphasised the provincial government's commitment by fully sponsoring the expedition programme. He said that this

75th Platinum Jubilee of Tirich Mir Aslam assures funding, training to mountaineers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Finance Muzzammil Aslam on Thursday said that provincial government would provide funding for the expedition to summit the province's highest peak, Tirich Mir.

Speaking at an event to celebrate the 75th Platinum Jubilee of the first ascent of Tirich Mir, he also announced that the royalty fee for mountaineers would be waived for the next two years, and all climbers aiming to summit the peak would receive comprehensive training and support.

The event was organised under the auspices of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), where the year 2025-26 was declared as the "Tirich Mir Year."

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was also signed on the occasion.

7th meeting of Medical Transplantation Regulatory Authority held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The seventh meeting of the Medical Transplantation Regulatory Authority (MTRA) was held under the chairmanship of Advisor to Health, Mr. Ihtesham Ali. The meeting was attended by Health Secretary Shahidullah, MTRA officials, and other members of the Authority.

During the session, participants were briefed on various agenda items. A thorough review was conducted on measures to simplify and streamline the process of human organ transplantation, making it

more accessible and understandable to the public.

One of the key discussion points was whether to make family donor consent mandatory or to develop clear protocols for non-family donors. A proposal to form a dedicated committee to address these matters was also presented.

Advisor to Health, Mr. Ihtesham Ali, tasked MTRA with proposing legal amendments to strengthen the prevention of illegal human organ trafficking. He was informed that the authority is currently investigating 12 cases of unlawful transplants in collaboration

with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

The Health Advisor directed the formation of a committee to review all existing health laws and regulations. This committee will identify legal gaps and propose necessary amendments to improve the regulatory framework. He also emphasized the role of religious scholars and clerics in raising awareness about organ donation within communities.

Discussions were also held regarding the establishment of the province's first-ever Transplant

Tower. It was informed that funds have already been released to Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH), where the project is progressing swiftly. Currently, a designated space is being prepared within KTH for transplant services. Eventually, a dedicated Transplant Tower will be constructed to facilitate all types of organ transplant procedures under one roof.

The meeting also reviewed MTRA's administrative challenges, budgetary allocations, and other operational matters, with the aim of enhancing the Authority's efficiency and outreach.

KPFA seizes large quantity of counterfeit drinks and spices

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KPFS&HFA) has carried out a series of successful operations in Peshawar and Swabi as part of its ongoing mission to ensure the provision of safe and quality food to the public. During the raids, a significant quantity of counterfeit and sub-standard food items, including spices and soft drinks, was seized, while one production unit was sealed and heavy fines were imposed.

According to the spokesperson of the Food Authority, the operations were conducted in the early hours on Yar

Hussain Road in Swabi, where the food safety team set up a checkpoint to inspect vehicles transporting food items. During the inspection, approximately 1,000 litres of fake soft drinks were recovered from a vehicle and confiscated on the spot. The responsible individuals were fined under the Food Safety Act. In a separate operation, the Peshawar food safety team raided a home-based spice manufacturing unit in the Haji Camp area of Peshawar.

The unit was found producing spices using hazardous ingredients such as used oil, wheat husk, and textile dyes. The team confiscated 1,000 kg of husk, 2 kg of artificial colorants, and

100 litres of used oil, which were immediately discarded. The unit was sealed, and legal action has been initiated against its owners.

The spokesperson further informed that a joint inspections were also carried out at various production units on Charsadda Road and Dalazak Road. One spice manufacturing and one macaroni production unit were fined for poor hygiene and sanitation practices.

Another spice unit was found in possession of 4,000 packs of counterfeit biryani masala and 200 litres of foul-smelling used oil. The items were seized, and legal proceedings were launched against the violators.

KPFS & HFA Director General Wasif Saeed lauded the food safety teams for their effective actions and reaffirmed the authority's commitment to a zero-tolerance policy against food adulteration and substandard products. He urged the public to report any suspected cases of food adulteration or unsafe practices to the Authority to help ensure public health and safety.

On this occasion, KP Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru, reiterated that strict legal action would be taken against all businesses involved in the production or sale of substandard and hazardous food products.

"There will be no leniency in such cases," he asserted.

MPs should head governing bodies of development authorities: Ali

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Tourism, Culture, Archaeology and Museums, Mian Sharafat Ali, has stated that it is a democratic and constitutional requirement to replace private chairpersons with elected public representatives in the governing bodies and board committees of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) as well as all other development authorities in the province. He added that the Constitution of

Pakistan grants the people the fundamental right to governance, and elected representatives best reflect the public will by ensuring transparency, accountability, and prioritization of local needs in policymaking.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the Standing Committee on Tourism and Culture held at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Secretariat.

The meeting was attended by committee members Rajab Ali Abbasi, Zar Alam Khan, Fateh-ul-Mulk Nasir, Ajab Gul, Neelofar Babar, and Jalal Khan, as well as Secretary of the Tourism

and Culture Department Dr. Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan and officials from other concerned departments.

The Secretary Tourism briefed the committee in detail on the coordination efforts and performance of the joint working group established in collaboration with the Local Government, Forest, and Irrigation Departments for the promotion of tourism. In addition, he informed the committee about taxation at tourist sites, enforcement of building codes, and proposed amendments to the River Act.

On the occasion, Mian Sharafat Ali emphasized

the importance of taking legislative steps and introducing relevant amendments to ensure the nomination of elected representatives as chairpersons in the acts regulating the KPCTA and development authorities.

He said this measure would not only strengthen democratic principles but also ensure the protection of public interests.

The meeting participants expressed their commitment to adopt a joint strategy for the development of tourist destinations in the province, effective policymaking, and enhanced interdepartmental cooperation.

VC KMU hands over additional charge of ICPU to Prof. Dr Ahmad

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a graceful yet simple ceremony held at Islamia College University, Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Vice Chancellor of Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar officially handed over the additional charge of Vice Chancellor of Islamia College University to the newly appointed Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Ahmad ur Rehman Saljuqi.

Speaking at the event, Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq expressed his gratitude to the provincial government for entrusting him with the additional responsibility, describing it as an honor and privilege to serve an institution that is the pride and identity of the province.

He highlighted several significant achievements accomplished during his brief tenure, made possible through the dedication and support of the university's faculty, administration, and support staff.

These include the implementation of an e-filing system, long awaited promotions of faculty and staff, recovery of encroached university land, removed harassers, revived Rs. 2B project, introduced technical subjects, got 6 campuses approved, recovered Rs. 20 crore fees, addressed hostel & discipline issues, appointed principal, convocation and the international standard renovation of the historic lawn.

He noted that these accomplishments were the result of collective teamwork and congratulated the uni-

versity's staff and faculty for their commitment and cooperation.

Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq expressed confidence that under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Ahmad ur Rehman Saljuqi, the university would continue its journey of growth and excellence.

He further hoped that Dr. Saljuqi would lead the university to new heights of success, maintaining its legacy of academic excellence and historic significance.

In conclusion, Prof. Dr. Ahmad ur Rehman Saljuqi and the university staff thanked Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq for his services and expressed hope that he would continue to support and guide the institution in the future with the same passion and dedication.





In brief

Free eye medical camp concluded F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: A three-day free eye screening camp ended here in the Darra Pezu town of Lakki Marwat district on Thursday. The management of Lucky cement limited had organized the camp with support of Al-Shifa trust under its community welfare initiative to provide local residents and those from adjacent areas with eye related healthcare facilities. The Abdul Razzaq Tabbawelfare dispensary in-charge Dr Zulfiqar said that a total of 1,563 patients from Lakki Marwat, DI Khan and Tank districts mostly women, children and elderly citizens were examined by doctors during the three days camp. He said that the patients were provided with eye check-ups, vision assessments, prescription glasses and treatment for common eye conditions. "The patients requiring further care were referred to specialized facilities", he claimed. He said that a team of qualified ophthalmologists and support staff ensured provision of quality care to the patients suffering from eye related diseases. Dr Zulfiqar said that free medicines and eyeglasses were also distributed among those in need. He said that the camp offered much-needed medical support to residents of southern districts, improving access to essential eye care services.

Anti-polio drive continue F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The ongoing special anti-polio campaign is progressing successfully across Lower Dir district, according to District Health Officer (DHO) Dr. Niaz Muhammad Afridi. Briefing media at his office on Tuesday, Dr. Afridi urged parents to fully cooperate with polio teams and ensure that all children under the age of five receive the oral polio vaccine to protect them from life-long disability. He said the five-day national polio campaign continued on the second day in all 34 union councils of Lower Dir, targeting a total of 352,570 children. To achieve this, 1,333 mobile teams, 58 transit teams, and 73 fixed teams have been deployed across the district. To ensure the safety of the health workers, Dr. Afridi said that 2,260 personnel from the police, Levies, and Frontier Corps (FC) have been assigned security duties during the campaign. He added that vaccine refusal cases are minimal in Lower Dir. "Parents who initially hesitate are being convinced through the help of local elders, religious scholars, and healthcare professionals," he noted.

Anti-polio drive reviewed F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu to review the progress of the third day of the ongoing anti-polio campaign. The meeting expressed satisfaction over the campaign's performance. Assistant Commissioner Munawar Hussain, CEO Health Dr. Kashif Bajwa, representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) and officials from other relevant departments attended the meeting. During the session, CEO Health Dr. Kashif Bajwa gave a detailed briefing on the third day's activities. He informed the participants that over 120,000 children were administered polio drops on the third day alone.

Swat Hotel Association demands industry status to boost tourism



Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The Swat Hotel Association has called on the federal government to grant industry status to the hotel sector in Swat, aiming to promote tourism and stabilize the local economy. This demand was made during a press conference held at the Swat Press Club, where association leaders highlighted the challenges faced by the hotel industry.

Association president Alhaj Zahid Khan, along with officials Javed Ali Shah, Sarwar Khan, Taj Khan, and other members, expressed their concerns about the government's lack of attention to the hotel sector's problems. Despite Swat being a major tourist destination attracting millions of visitors annually, the industry struggles with

unresolved issues. The leaders emphasized that recognizing the hotel industry as an industry would provide financial, administrative, and legal benefits to hotel owners.

The association also raised several other critical issues affecting tourists and locals alike. The dilapidated condition of the Barikot to Kalam road was cited as a significant problem, with an urgent need for repair and construction. Additionally, the lack of internet facilities in Kalam, a popular tourist spot, was highlighted as a major inconvenience for both tourists and hotel owners. The inadequate medical facilities at Kalam Hospital and the absence of emergency services in district hospitals were also criticized.

The Swat Hotel Association strongly criticized the

Swat Development Authority, accusing it of engaging in illegal activities and harassing local hotel owners under the guise of anti-encroachment measures. The association protested against notices issued to hotel owners regarding alleged pollution of the Swat River, claiming these actions are unjustified.

The association demanded immediate government intervention to address infrastructure, internet, health, cleanliness, and security issues in Swat. Failure to do so, they warned, would lead the association to take legal action. By resolving these issues, the government can enhance tourist facilities and promote local businesses, ultimately benefiting the region's economy.

Residents' complaints in Kuli Katcheri F.P. Report

BUNER: A Khulli Kachehri held at tehsil Gadezai lawn on Thursday which was attended by Deputy Commissioner, district police officer, Assistant Commissioner Gadezai, Tehsil chairman, heads of all departments, and medical superintendent along with area elders, youth and various union leaders and the people of the area in large numbers.

The rickshaw union and hospital union leaders openly mentioned the problems faced by the people of the area and those associated with the union. Among them, they have declared the establishment of peace in the area as the top priority and among other issues and difficulties, they have demanded the accuracy of revenue records, immediate appointment of a computer operator in the SDC, ensuring transparency, re-arranging the land value table rate and make easy process the transfer of lands, taking notice of the felling of forests and planting of cardamom saplings, completing the Katkala Grade Station soon to overcome excessive load shedding.

Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayyum and DPO Saud Khan assured the public that their problems, difficulties, complaints and objections have been noted and that they will hold a joint meeting with the officers of all departments in a week to resolve urgent issues immediately and will try to resolve others by formulating a plan of action. DC Buner also gave the good news of finalizing steps to start and complete several development projects including Kalil Road Pir Baba Jowar and Jowar to Daggar Road Gadezai Boys and Girls College in Gadezai. He assured that officials involved in laxity, negligence and corruption will not be forgiven under any circumstances.

Residents facing 18 hours load shedding F.P. Report

LARKANA: Scorching heat in Larkana, power outage for 18 out of 24 hours in Larkana, northern Sindh district, while the temperature was a record 50 degrees Celsius, led citizens of Larkana to take to the streets, while the SEPCO administration continued with load shedding.

According to details, due to the intense heat in Larkana, people were deprived of electricity during the summer. Due to the arbitrary load shedding by the Sepco administration, the lives of the citizens were disrupted for several hours in different areas of the city including Sachal Colony, Allahabad, Murad Wahan, Bakrani Tower, Empire Road, Ali Goharabad. Due to the tripping due to continuous load shedding, the citizens' electric cookers, televisions, air conditioners, and water-powered motors also burned down.

In this regard, residents Junaid Soomro, Waheed Solangi, Mir Shafique Laghari and others protested before the media. In this occasion they said that the temperature in Larkana city is recording 45 to 50 degrees, but the Sepco administration is not ready to take any step. They demanded from the higher management of the WAPDA department to end the suffering of arbitrary load shedding and the citizens of Larkana Electricity facilities should be provided to them, otherwise the scope of the protest will be expanded.

Mukhtars threatens strike: The Mukhtiarkars of Sindh have threatened a strike and boycott of revenue recovery and polio duty due to the refusal to promote senior Mukhtiarkars to Assistant Commissioners and the non-implementation of the court order regarding DPC proceedings and promotions. In this regard, an emergency meeting of the Sindh Mukhtiarkar Welfare Association was held at a private club, attended by Association President Abdul Aziz Junejo, core committee members, and Mukhtiarkars awaiting postings. According to a press release issued by the Sindh Mukhtiarkar Welfare Association, it was demanded that the most senior Mukhtiarkars be promoted without delay to the post of AC.

Prices of sacrificial animals soar in Landi Kotal



F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The tribesmen of Landi Kotal have complained against what they said was an unmatched hike in prices of sacrificial animals, saying the practice would deprive many of the believers to perform the Sunnah of Ibrahim (Peace Be Upon Him).

Although the government has imposed a ban on export of livestock to Afghanistan to keep the prices of sacrificial animals under control but to in avail. According to a survey conducted by this scribe in the main cattle market near Tableghi Markaz, Landi Kotal, a total of almost 50000 are slaughtered in the town on every Eidul Azha.

Out of the total number 30000 are goats, sheep etc. while the rest 20000 are

cow, ox buffalo etc. locals said. Tribesmen complained that people involved in the selling of the sacrificial animals demanded sky-rocketing prices of the sacrificial animals that were out of reach of common man and as compared to last year 60% to 75% rise had been noticed in the cattle prices.

In Landi Kotal tribesmen prefer to buy sheep and this year the prices of sheep started from Rs.50000 to Rs.90000. Similarly price of cow, ox and buffalo witnessed from Rs. 150000 to Rs.500000. Sherbaz Khan, a seller in the cattle market, said that prices of the big sacrificial animals rose from Rs.20000 to Rs.40000 per head because of the rise in transportation and other expenses. One big animal ate as much as Rs.300 of green fodder per day that added to the price of the

animals, he added.

The sellers said that due to high prices people were least enthusiastic to buy sacrificial animals although the Eid was around the corner. Gula Jan, a local buyer, said that the hike in price of cattle would leave hundreds of white collar citizens without performing the religious rites. The prices of the animals increased by thousands of rupees but their income was the same, he added.

He maintained that if the import of sheep and lamb from Afghanistan through Torkham crossing was permitted, many tribesmen would be able to buy sacrificial animals without disturbing their monthly budgets. Many buyers believed that prices of the cattle will come down as the festival approaches, saying the sellers will sell all of their cattle before the Eid.

KP Minister visits site of tragic boat incident

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Advocate, has along with Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal and PTI workers, visited the site of the tragic boat capsizing incident in Khushal Garh area of Kohat district and supervised the ongoing rescue operation to search for missing persons.

It may be recalled that a boat carrying 9 people, including 5 Chinese and 4 Pakistanis, were on board capsized in Indus river at Khusha Garh of Kohat. 2 people, Malik Shahzeb and a security guard of a gold mines company, are still missing. Rescue teams and divers have been searching for them since yesterday.

The law minister directed the relevant departments and institutions present at the spot to use all available resources for the early search for the missing persons and all possible measures should be taken to protect human lives.

Aftab Alam appealed the public not to hinder the rescue operation and fully cooperate with those engaged in the rescue operation and relief activities. He prayed that Allah Almighty grant Malik Shahzeb and Habib a high place in Paradise and grant patience to the bereaved families.

The district Administration Kohat is closely monitoring the Rescue Operation.

families.

The aforementioned tragic incident has caused a wave of grief and deep sorrow in the area. Rescue operations are still ongoing and all possible efforts are being made to search for the missing persons.

Commissioner reviews rescue operation of boat incident: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah has visited Khushal Garh at Kohat District to review the Rescue Operation of a tragic incident of a boat capsizing in the Indus River, in which several people are reported missing.

As the incident was reported, Commissioner Kohat Division Motasim Billah Shah along with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali and Assistant Commissioner Kohat Nimra Owais, immediately rushed to the spot and reviewed the ongoing rescue operations. Four teams of Rescue 1122, including expert divers, ambulance staff, and personnel equipped with modern equipments, are engaged in rescue activities at the affected site. Rescue agencies are continuously engaged in the search and rescue of people drowning in the water.

The district Administration Kohat is closely monitoring the Rescue Operation.

Commissioner Kohat was briefed in detail at the scene and issued instructions to utilize all available resources for recovery of the missing persons as soon as possible.

Commissioner Kohat while talking to the media on this occasion, said that all possible steps are being taken to protect human lives and no negligence will be tolerated in this regard. He appealed the people not to hinder the rescue operation and fully cooperate with the administration. The incident has caused a wave of deep sorrow and grief among the locals. Rescue operations are still in progress and all possible efforts are being made to search for the missing persons.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram has under Section 144 CrPc banned on illegal Cattle Markets (Mandi), Animal hides/skin collection by banned organizations, individuals, fire crackers/toy guns and their sale, one wheeling, aerial firing, display/carrying of weapons in public places and swimming/boating in Dams, Rivers, Canals and other water bodies with immediate effect for period of 30 days. The violation of this order is punishable under Section 188 PPC. This was officially notified here today.

Uplift projects for Mardan in KP budget

F.P. Report

M A R D A N : Commissioner Mardan said that public welfare and sustainable development of the province was the cornerstone of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government's development policy. He revealed that in the upcoming fiscal year's Annual Development Programme (ADP), mega projects worth billions of rupees have been proposed for the districts of Mardan and Swabi, based on consultations with public representatives. He claimed that these projects were expected to set Mardan Division on the path to progress.

He was addressing a high-level meeting held in the conference room of the Commissioner's Office to review the current fiscal year's ADP and discuss proposed schemes for the next fiscal year. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Mardan Dr. Azmatullah Wazir, Additional Deputy Commissioners (Finance

and Planning) of Mardan and Swabi, officers from all provincial and federal departments, and representatives of parliamentarians.

Commissioner Nisar Ahmad directed officers of the line departments to ensure, without exception, the completion of ongoing development projects by June 30, in line with the instructions of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He noted that the Chief Minister had already instructed the Finance Department to release the remaining funds for ongoing projects.

WSSCM achieves global milestone: Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) has achieved another significant milestone globally by securing official membership in the Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) under UN - Habitat initiative.

The announcement was made by Chairman Board of Directors Engineer

Adil Nawaz and Chief Executive Officer Shahid Khan, who credited this achievement to the company's strong teamwork and collective efforts. With this membership, WSSCM is now eligible to vote in the international Steering Committee of GWOPA and participate in its membership elections.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman and CEO emphasized that WSSCM will benefit from the shared expertise of international organizations to introduce innovation and modern technology in water and sanitation services in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), which focuses on clean water and sanitation for all. They reaffirmed the company's commitment to strengthening the capacity and performance of operators to ensure improved service delivery and access to clean water and sanitation systems for citizens.



Friday, May 30, 2025

Ambassador Faisal visits Pristine Private School

F.P. Report

DUBAI: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, paid an official visit to Pristine Private School in Dubai. He was warmly received by the school's Founding Director, Ms. Shahida Salam, Mr. Abdus Salam, and other senior members of the school administration.

During the visit, Ms. Shahida Salam briefed the ambassador on the school's journey since its establishment in 1992, highlighting its commitment to delivering high-quality education from Foundation Stage through A Levels to a diverse student body representing over 47 nationalities. She emphasized the school's dedication to tolerance, mutual respect, and inclusion, which has earned it numerous prestigious accolades over the past three decades.



Ambassador Tirmizi toured both the primary and secondary sections of the school, including its science and computer laboratories, art and music rooms, sports fields, and other key facilities. He expressed admiration for the students' academic achievements, interpersonal skills, and overall learning environment. He also engaged with students in various classrooms, commending their

confidence and clarity of thought.

Appreciating the school's contribution to education in the UAE, Ambassador Tirmizi praised the founding members and management of Pristine Private School for their dedicated pursuit of academic excellence and their service to the multicultural educational landscape of the Emirates.

Residents fear for safety after deadly blast at China chemical plant

GAOMI, China (Reuters): Black smoke hung over a chemical plant in eastern China, a day after a massive blast killed at least five people, flattened buildings and fuelled safety fears among residents living close to the factory. Six people are still missing after the explosion at the plant in Gaomi, a city in the eastern province of Shandong, the official Xinhua news agency said. Another 19 were injured.

With nearby streets largely deserted, residents surveyed damage to homes and fretted about health risks. "Ideally this chemical factory shouldn't be so close to here ... it's too near, isn't it? Especially at night when it's operating, the smell from the factory is really strong," farmer Yu Qianming told Reuters.

Local officials have yet to issue the results of air quality tests conducted in the area around the plant after the blast, the cause of which is not yet known. The 69-year-old said he and his wife had moved their grandchild elsewhere as a precaution as smoke lingered over the plant, although they felt safe in their home as long as the wind kept blowing in another direction. His family escaped without injury, he said, while showing Reuters roofing material that had collapsed and broken windows shattered by the force of the blast. Police had blocked some roads leading to the factory. Vehicles patrolled the perimeter of the site that sprawls over more than 47 hectares (116 acres), while drone footage showed multi-storey buildings flattened by the blast. Scars from the blast could also be seen on buildings in the immediate area, some of them left blackened and crumpling.

Liu Ming, a 60-year-old who lives 500 metres (547 yards) away, said she was considering moving after her home and clothing store suffered extensive damage, though she did not have any firm plans yet. "(The authorities) told us to stay in a hotel. It's okay for a day or two, but look at us now. We have no land, nothing," she added, picking up a large window frame pulverised by the blast and shards of glass strewn among boxes of thread and clothes on the floor. "The fire was intense, bursting out fiercely, and it was really close to us," she said. Several shops away, another store owner had a minor head wound from the blast, which happened while he was eating lunch.

Local authorities in Shandong met for a briefing on the blast and to discuss safety concerns, provincial media said. The meeting focused on high-risk industries such as chemicals and coal. The State Council, China's cabinet, said it would directly supervise the investigation, state broadcaster CCTV reported, as it does with major incidents. Set up in August 2019 in the Gaomi Renhe chemical park, the Shandong Youdao Chemical plant develops and makes chemicals used in pesticides and pharmaceuticals, the company said on its website, with more than 300 employees at the site. Blasts in recent years at chemical plants in China have included one in the northwest region of Ningxia in 2024 and another in the southeastern province of Jiangxi in 2023. In 2015, two massive explosions at warehouses of hazardous and flammable chemicals in the port city of Tianjin that killed more than 170 people and injured 700 prompted tougher laws on storage of chemicals.



WASHINGTON: People hold up signs during the Harvard Students for Freedom rally in support of international students at Harvard.

Palestinians overwhelm new Gaza food center

GAZA STRIP (AP): Chaos erupted on the second day of aid operations by a new US-backed group in Gaza as desperate Palestinians overwhelmed a center distributing food, breaking through fences. Nearby Israeli troops fired warning shots, sending people fleeing in panic.

An AP journalist heard Israeli tank and gunfire and saw a military helicopter firing flares. The Israeli military said its troops fired the warning shots in the area outside the center and that "control over the situation was established." At least three injured Palestinians were seen by The Associated Press being brought from the scene, one of them bleeding from his leg.

The distribution hub outside Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah had been opened the day before by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which has been slated by Israel to take over aid operations. The UN and other humanitarian organizations have rejected the new system, saying it won't be able to meet the needs of Gaza's 2.3 million people and allows Israel to use food as a weapon to control the population. They have also warned of the risk of friction between Israeli troops and people seeking supplies. Palestinians have become desperate for food after nearly three months of Israeli blockade pushed Gaza to the brink of famine. Palestinians at the scene told AP that small numbers of people made their way to the GHF center and received food boxes. As word spread, large numbers of men, women and children walked for several miles from the sprawling tent camps along Gaza's Mediterranean coast. To reach the hub, they had to pass through nearby Israeli military positions. By the afternoon, hundreds of thousands were massed at the hub. Videos show the crowds funneled in long lines through chain-link fence passages. Two people said each person was

searched and had their faces scanned for identification before being allowed to receive the boxes. Crowds swelled and turmoil erupted, with people tearing down fences and grabbing boxes. The staff at the site were forced to flee, they said.

The AP journalist positioned some distance away heard gunfire and rounds of tank fire. Smoke could be seen rising from where one round impacted. He saw a military helicopter overhead firing flares. "There was no order, the people rushed to take, there was shooting, and we fled," said Hosni Abu Amra, who had been waiting to receive aid. "We fled without taking anything that would help us get through this hunger." "It was chaos," said Ahmed Abu Taha, who said he heard gunfire and saw Israeli military aircraft overhead. "People were panicked." Crowds were seen running from the site. A few managed to secure aid boxes - containing basic items like sugar, flour, pasta and tahini - but the vast majority left empty-handed. In a statement, GHF said that because of the large number of Palestinians seeking aid, staff at the hub followed the group's safety protocols and "fell back" to allow them to dissipate, then later resumed operations.

A spokesperson for the group told the AP that no shots were fired from GHF. Speaking on condition of anonymity in line with the group's rules, the spokesperson said the protocols aim at "avoiding loss of life, which is exactly what happened." GHF uses armed private contractors to guard the hubs and the transportation of supplies. The hub is also close to Israeli military positions in the Morag Corridor, a band of territory across the breadth of Gaza that divides Rafah from the rest of the territory. GHF has set up four hubs around Gaza to distribute food, two of which began operating - both of them in the Rafah area.

The UN and other humanitarian groups have refused to participate in GHF's system, saying it violates humanitarian principles. They say it can be used by Israel to forcibly displace the population by requiring them to move near the few distribution hubs or else face starvation - a violation of international law. They have also opposed the use of facial recognition to vet recipients. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu commented on the turmoil at the Rafah center, saying, "There was some loss of control momentarily ... happily we brought it under control." He repeated that Israel plans to move Gaza's entire population to a "sterile zone" at the southern end of the territory while troops fight Hamas elsewhere.

Israel has said the new system is necessary because it claims Hamas has been siphoning off supplies that reach Gaza. The UN has denied that any significant diversion takes place. Throughout the war, the UN and other aid groups have conducted a massive operation distributing food, medicine and other supplies to wherever Palestinians are located. Israel says GHF will replace that network, but the past week has allowed a trickle of aid to enter Gaza for the UN to distribute. COGAT, the Israeli military agency in charge of coordinating aid, said that 400 trucks of supplies, mainly food, was waiting on the Gaza side of the main crossing from Israel, but that the UN had not collected them. It said Israel has extended the times for collection and expanded the routes that the UN can use inside Gaza. Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN humanitarian office OCHA, told reporters in Geneva that agencies have struggled to pick up the supplies "because of the insecure routes that are being assigned to us by the Israeli authorities to use." He said the amount of aid allowed the past week was "vastly insufficient."

China flexes military muscle with East Asian naval activity

BEIJING (Reuters): China has flexed its muscles this month by sending an unusually large number of naval and coast guard vessels through a swathe of East Asian waters, according to security documents and officials, in moves that have unnerved regional capitals. Since early May, China deployed fleets larger than usual, including navy, coast guard and other ships near Taiwan, the southern Japanese islands and the East and South China Seas, according to three regional security officials and documents of regional military activities reviewed by Reuters.

On May 21 and May 27, for instance, China deployed nearly 60 and more than 70 ships, respectively, around three-quarters of them naval, the documents show. These included guided-missile frigates, destroyers and coast guard boats. Beijing also dispatched two aircraft carrier groups, with the Shandong now in the busy waterway of the South China Sea and the Liaoning off the southeastern coast of Taiwan, the documents show.

"They are exerting pressure on the whole of the first island chain amid global geopolitical uncertainties," said one security official. The reference is to waters stretching from Japan through Taiwan, the Philippines and on to Borneo, enclosing the seas around China's coast.

"They are trying to reinforce their dominance," the source said, adding that drills this month by the Liaoning, the oldest of China's three aircraft carriers, simulated attacks on foreign ships and aircraft around the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea.

There was an "obvious" stepped-up Chinese naval presence this month, added a second source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, as did the first, citing the sensitivity of the intelligence assessment. "China clearly wants to show these are its home waters and it can operate when and where it wants," the source said.

China's defence ministry did not respond to a request for comment. Over the past two weeks China declared several live-fire drill areas off its coast, including last week one directly facing southwestern Taiwan. Last Wednesday, Chinese state television showed images of amphibious drills in the southern province of Fujian, across the strait from Taiwan, but did not give an exact location.

This week, Japan has been tracking the Liaoning and its accompanying warships through the southern Japanese islands and into the Western Pacific. China seems to be trying to improve its capacity to operate far from the Chinese coast, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said. "The Japanese government intends to keep a close eye on

relevant movement and do its utmost in carrying out monitoring and surveillance activities," he told reporters on Wednesday.

Speaking in Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the ships' activities were in line with international law and practice and Japan should "look at them objectively and rationally". China has kept up its stand-off with the Philippines in the South China Sea, where its foreign ministry urged the Philippines to immediately stop "infringement and provocation".

The Philippine Navy's spokesperson on South China Sea issues, Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad, told Reuters that China's "illegal presence" in the maritime zones of Southeast Asian states "has been disturbing the peace in the region and is contrary to pronouncements of its 'peaceful rise'." The spike in Chinese military activity has also come as Taiwan President Lai Ching-te marked the anniversary this month of a year in office.

China has staged three major rounds of war games since the inauguration of Lai, whom it calls a "separatist". On Wednesday, Taiwan's defence ministry said the Liaoning was off the island's southeast coast, adding that Taiwan would raise its combat preparedness in line with the threat level.

China's most advanced bombers seen on island

HONG KONG (Reuters): Satellite imagery shows China landed two of its most advanced bombers in the disputed Parcel islands in the South China Sea this month - a gesture that some analysts described as Beijing's latest signalling of its growing military capabilities to rivals.

The deployment marks the first time the long-range H-6 bombers have landed on Woody Island in the Paracels since 2020, and the movement of the now upgraded aircraft comes amid tensions with the Philippines, operations near Taiwan and ahead of the region's biggest defence forum this weekend. "China's long-range bombers don't need to be on the Paracels so it does appear to be omni-directional signalling by Beijing - against the Philippines and against the US and other things that are going on," said Collin Koh, a defence scholar at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

French President Emmanuel Macron is due to open the three-day Shangri-La Dialogue forum in Singapore with a speech while US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth will outline the Trump administration's approach to the region. A British aircraft carrier is expected in the South China Sea on a rare deployment next month, diplomats say. Satellites captured two H-6 planes flying over the hotly disputed Scarborough Shoal, also in the South China Sea, just ahead of Hegseth's visit to the Philippines in late

March, when he reaffirmed the United States' "ironclad commitment" to its treaty ally.

Regional diplomats and analysts say deployments of the jet-powered H-6 are closely scrutinised, given the way its Cold War-era airframe has been modernised to carry anti-ship and land attack cruise missiles, while some of the planes are capable of launching nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. A potential threat to US bases in the region, H-6 bombers were deployed in wargames around Taiwan in October, and in July flew close to the US mainland for the first time.

Neither China's defence ministry nor the Philippines' maritime and national security council immediately responded to Reuters' requests for comment. China's occupation of the Paracels is disputed by Vietnam, whose foreign ministry also did not immediately respond for comment.

Echoing the development of the US B-52, the basic H-6 dates back to 1950s Soviet designs but it remains China's most advanced long-range bomber having been re-fitted with improved engines and modern flight systems along with its state-of-the-art weaponry. Images provided to Reuters by Maxar Technologies show two H-6 bombers on a runway on Woody Island on May 19.

Another Maxar image on the same date show two Y-20 transport aircraft and an KJ-500 early warning plane - an aircraft that is seen as vital to China being able to

control and secure increasingly complex air and sea operations. Some analysts said the planes may have first arrived on May 17 and been present until May 23.

Ben Lewis, founder of open source data platform PLATracker, said they thought it was unlikely that the H-6s would be deployed long-term on Woody Island or be permanently based there. "The ability to cycle forces through the bases, especially higher level assets like the H-6, provides the PLA with a force protection mechanism," he said, referring to China's People's Liberation Army.

China's Southern Theatre Command, which covers the South China Sea, maintains two regiments of the bombers, according to the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies. The bombers are generally kept at heavily fortified bases on the Chinese mainland, where they would have more protection in a conflict from US attacks in conflict scenarios.

The US maintains jet fighter wings in Japan, including on its forward deployed aircraft carrier, and on Guam, which is also home to B-52s. China claims sovereignty over nearly all the South China Sea, including areas claimed by Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. A 2016 ruling by an international arbitral tribunal found Beijing's sweeping claims had no basis under international law, a decision China rejects.

Russian hackers stole police data in cyberattack

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP): A previously unknown Russian hacker group with suspected ties to the Kremlin was responsible for a cyberattack last year on the Dutch police and has also targeted other Western nations that deliver military support to Ukraine, intelligence agencies announced.

The agencies said in a report that the group, which they called Laundry Bear, is actively trying to steal sensitive data from European Union and NATO countries and is "extremely likely Russian state supported." "Laundry Bear is after information

about the purchase and production of military equipment by Western governments and Western deliveries of weapons to Ukraine," Vice Adm. Peter Reesink, director of the military intelligence agency MIVD, said in a statement.

There was no immediate comment from Moscow on the report. The Netherlands has been a strong supporter of Ukraine's war effort since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 and has given military equipment, including F-16 fighter jets to Kyiv. The Russian hackers broke into a police account and

accessed work-related contact details of all Dutch police officers in September last year, in a cyberattack that sent shockwaves through the force.

The Dutch intelligence agencies published a detailed analysis of methods used by the hacker group to break into computer networks and cloud services. Erik Akerboom, chief of the domestic intelligence agency AIVD, said that outlining the group's work means that "not only governments, but also manufacturers, suppliers and other targets can arm themselves against this form of espionage.

AMMAN (AP): A Swedish man was indicted in connection with the killing by the Islamic State group of a Jordanian pilot whose plane went down in Syria on Christmas Eve 2014, prosecutors said. The 26-year-old Jordanian, 1st Lt. Mu'ath al-Kaseasbeh, was taken captive after his F-16 fighter jet crashed near the extremists' de facto capital of Raqqa in northern Syria. He was forced into a cage that was set on fire, killing him on camera in early 2015.

The suspect was identified by Swedish prosecutors as Osama Krayem, 32, who is alleged to have traveled to Syria in September 2014 to fight for IS. The airman became the first known foreign military pilot to fall into the militants' hands after the US-led international coalition began its aerial campaign

against the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq in 2014. Jordan, a close US ally, was a member of the coalition and the pilot's killing appeared aimed at pressuring the government of Jordan to leave the alliance. Krayem is set to go on trial June 4 in Stockholm. He was previously convicted in France and Brussels for fatal Islamic State attacks in those countries.

In a 20-minute video released in 2015, purportedly showing al-Kaseasbeh's killing, he displayed signs of having been beaten, including a black eye. Toward the end of the clip, he is shown wearing an orange jumpsuit. He stands in an outdoor cage as a masked

militant ignites a line of fuel leading to it. The footage was widely released as part of the militant group's propaganda. The killing sparked outrage and anti-IS demonstrations in Jordan, and King Abdullah II ordered two al-Qaida prisoners to be executed in response. In 2022, Krayem was among 20 men convicted by a special terrorism court in Paris for involvement in a wave of Islamic State attacks in the French capital in 2015, targeting the Bataclan theater, Paris cafes and the national stadium. The assaults killed 130 people and injured hundreds, some permanently maimed. Krayem was sentenced to 30 years in prison, for charges including

complicity to terrorist murder. French media reported that France agreed in March to turn Krayem over to Sweden for nine months, to assist with the Swedish probe and his expected trial. Sweden is then to return him to France so he can serve out his sentence, French media reported. In 2023, a Belgian court sentenced Krayem, among others, to life in prison on charges of terrorist murder in connection with 2016 suicide bombings that killed 32 people and wounded hundreds at Brussels airport and a busy subway station, the country's deadliest peacetime attack.

Krayem was aboard the commuter train that was hit, but did not detonate

the explosives he was carrying. Both the Paris and Brussels attacks were linked to the same Islamic State network. Krayem grew up in Rosengard, a district notorious in Sweden for high crime and unemployment rates where more than 80 percent of the residents are first- or second-generation immigrants. "He was well-known to the local police for multiple criminal activities like thefts, for instance," Muhammad Khorshid, who ran a program in Rosengard to help immigrants integrate into Swedish society, told The Associated Press in 2016. He said Krayem "was the perfect target for radicalization - no job, no future, no money."

Krayem had posted photos on social media from Syria, including one where he posed with an assault rifle in front of the black flag of the Islamic State group. At its peak, IS ruled an area half the size of the United Kingdom in Iraq and Syria and was notorious for its brutality - much of it directed against fellow Sunni Muslims as well as against those the group deemed to be heretics. It beheaded civilians, slaughtered 1,700 captured Iraqi soldiers in a short period, and enslaved and raped thousands of women from the Yazidi community, one of Iraq's oldest religious minorities. In March 2019, the US-backed and Kurdish-led fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces captured the last sliver of land the extremists controlled in the eastern Syrian town of Baghouz.

Swedish man charged over 2015 killing

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Lebanon's Palestinian militias were born of Israel's occupation

FOR a country trying to write a new chapter in its history, Lebanon faces an array of formidable challenges. While Israel continues to carry out air strikes and occupy Lebanese territory in the south, the new government in Beirut is trying to exert its authority nationwide – including in areas where its writ does not currently run.

This difficult process is an important part of the country's efforts to recover and prosper. As Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said in a keynote address to the Arab Media Summit in Dubai yesterday: "Our country, exhausted by divisions, wars and patronage systems, has decided to regain itself, to regain its word, to regain its state".

A prime example of this challenge to the state is to be found inside Lebanon's 12 official Palestinian refugee camps. Located from Tripoli in the north to Tyre in the south, these poverty-stricken communities are home to more than 200,000 Palestinians displaced or born in exile owing to their expulsion from their homeland in previous decades by Israeli forces. Outside state control, these areas have been ruled by an array of armed factions since the 1969 Cairo Agreement, which ceded responsibility for their security to the Palestine Liberation Organisation. An informal understanding prohibits Lebanese security forces from even entering the camps.

Generations later, this arrangement has added to instability within Lebanon. Some camps have become victims of outlaws, drug traffickers and extremists deciding to hide in plain sight there. Rival groups have clashed repeatedly; in September 2023, more than 2,000 people were displaced in Ain Al Hilweh – Lebanon's largest refugee camp – as Palestinian factions and armed extremists fought with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

This would be an intolerable situation for any country, especially one as volatile as Lebanon. On Monday, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun announced that a process to disarm Palestinian refugee camps will begin in mid-June. It will be a difficult task, and may not proceed on that time table. Lebanon's underfunded armed forces have a matter of weeks to bring the situation under control and reverse decades of entrenched support for armed groups with their own political agendas and, in some cases, foreign support.

There are also deeper issues to be reckoned with. The broken situation in the camps is born out of Israel's continuing occupation of Palestinian land. Palestinians in Lebanon want to go to their homeland, not live a shadow existence on the fringes of Lebanese society. At the same time, Israel's bombardment and starvation of Palestinians in Gaza provides a difficult and sensitive context for Beirut's attempt to bring Palestinian weapons under control.

The Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, met Mr Aoun in Beirut last week, and is seeking to co-ordinate the disarmament. But for the plan to have the greatest chance of success, it must be made clear that it is not about disempowering Palestinians or enabling one faction to dominate other – it is about restoring Lebanese sovereignty and stability.

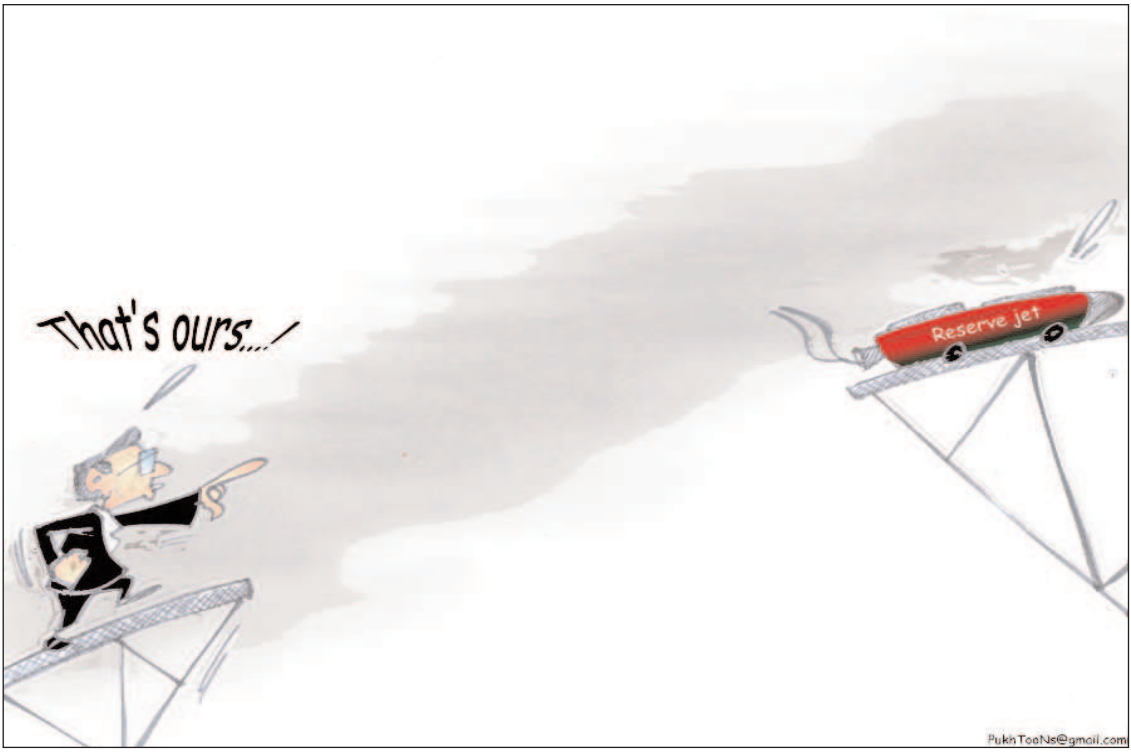
There will be those who will regard this process as a litmus test for how to handle another armed organisation outside state in control in Lebanon, namely Hezbollah. But the situation regarding the Iran-backed group has a different dynamic that does not allow for a one-size-fits-all solution.

Nevertheless, the principle behind disarming Lebanon's many militias is key: that a country's legitimate government holds the monopoly over armed force.

As Serhan Serhan, a member of the PA's Legislative Council and deputy secretary of Mr Abbas's Fatah faction in Lebanon said recently: "We are all under the ceiling of Lebanese law." If this is true, then there should be no room for any one faction to bring the house down.

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A flight of faith and trust

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

IN childhood, our grandmothers would gather us under the soft glow of lantern light and tell us stories-tales that were more than just entertainment. They were gentle lessons in morality and faith. One such story was of three friends trapped in a cave, with a rock sealing the entrance. In desperation, each prayed to Allah by mentioning a sincere, righteous deed they had done in life. One by one, their prayers were accepted, and the rock shifted-until they were free. These stories stayed with us, quietly embedding the belief that sincere faith, when coupled with righteous action, can move mountains-or even stones. But recently, an incident unfolded in Libya that seemed like one of those tales springing to life-except this time, it wasn't fiction. It was real. It was a miracle. And it happened before the eyes of thousands.

This is the astonishing account of Amer Mahdi Mansour Gaddafi, a young Libyan pilgrim whose name is now known across the Islamic world. His story is not just about Hajj, nor merely about airline mishaps-it is about conviction, faith, and a personal relationship with the Divine. What is your relationship with Allah? That is the question his journey asks each of us.

Al-Mahdi had been eager to perform Hajj, but when he reached Sabha Airport in Southern Libya, he was denied boarding due to a passport issue. The flight

departed as scheduled, taking with its hundreds of hopeful pilgrims-but leaving one behind. Anyone else might have crumbled, protested, or returned home in despair. But Amir al-Mahdi remained where he was. He did not turn back. Again and again, he repeated, "I have made up my mind. I am going for Hajj, and I will go!" Others tried to comfort him. "The plane has gone, brother. Next year, In Shaa Allah." But he would not hear it. "This plane will not leave without me," he declared, "It will return."

And then, the first sign of Divine intervention; the plane, already in the sky, suffered a technical fault and returned to the airport. It was a chance, perhaps a miracle in motion. Yet, even as the plane was on the tarmac again, the crew refused to let him board. The technical issue was fixed, and the flight took off-without him. Once again.

But Amir al-Mahdi did not waver. He remained, rooted by faith. "Obedience will not depart without me," he insisted. And lo-what can only be described as divine will intervened a second time. The plane, after taking off once more, encountered another technical issue and returned yet again. This time, the pilot made a historic declaration: "Until Amir al-Mahdi is on board, I will not fly the plane."

And so, the man who had been rejected was now the key to the plane's journey. Videos of the

moment he boarded went viral. His radiant face, wrapped in the white Ihram robe, was a testament not only to personal triumph, but to the immeasurable power of trust in Allah.

The Quran says: "And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose." (Surah At-Talaq, 65:3)

And another verse reminds us: "Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?" (Surah Az-Zumar, 39:36)

This was a man who placed his entire reliance on the will of Allah, and he was answered in a way rarely seen in the modern world.

Social media exploded with reactions. Some marveled at the miracle; others questioned the logistics. Someone wrote, "When a plane returns twice for you, this is not normal. You must have a special relationship with Allah."

Another, wrote: "When intentions are pure and trust is sincere, miracles appear. Allah is powerful over all things."

A Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (?) beautifully complements this narrative:

"Know that if the nation were to gather to benefit you with anything, it would only benefit you with something that Allah had already written for you. And if they were to gather to harm you with anything, they would only harm you with something Allah had already written against you."

The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried." (Tirmidhi)

Indeed, what had been written for Amir al-Mahdi could not be altered by any immigration officer, flight manifest, or protocol. What Allah had willed, had to be.

Upon reaching the sacred land, Al-Mahdi appeared in a video, now widely shared across the Muslim world. In it, he humbly says, "Alhamdulillah! I have reached the House of Allah." A soul full of gratitude, a heart triumphant in faith.

Today, Amir al-Mahdi has become the most famous person in the Islamic world-not because he sought recognition, but because he sought Allah. And as the Quran proclaims: "You honor whom You will, and You humble whom You will. In Your Hand is all good. Indeed, You are over all things competent." (Surah Aal-e-Imran, 3:26)

His story has brought to life those old tales our grandmothers once told us. Except this time, it wasn't three friends in a cave, nor a passenger miraculously spared from a crash. It was a pilgrim who believed that his Lord would never abandon him-and he was right. The plane did not depart without him, because the One who commands the skies had written something else entirely.

The truth is that when a heart calls out in purity and the soul trusts completely, even the heavens must listen. For the One who halts a flying plane is the One who sees into hearts.

Syria, Sudan and the road to Washington

Areig Elhag

DESPITE the major economic focus of President Donald Trump's Gulf tour earlier this month, Syria was also a one-off political topic, especially after Trump's meeting with Ahmad Al-Sharaa and the surprise decision to lift US sanctions on the country. Many saw this move as a historic opportunity for the new Syrian government to return to the international stage after years of isolation.

This shift marks a major change in US policy toward Damascus. It was made possible largely by Saudi-led diplomatic efforts, following strong promises by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that he would support Syria's reintegration into the region and the world. The situation is similar to Sudan's experience, when the US lifted sanctions on Khartoum during Trump's first term after it joined the Abraham Accords.

In October 2020, Sudan achieved a breakthrough when the Trump administration removed it from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. This followed years of sanctions due to Sudan's past support for extremist groups like Al-Qaeda in the 1990s. That decision came after negotiations, with Sudan agreeing to pay compensation to terror victims and to normalize relations with Israel. A signing ceremony at the White House was even expected.

But Sudan did not fully benefit from that opportunity. One key reason was the

shift in US leadership, with President Joe Biden taking office in January 2021 and his administration prioritizing other issues. Delays in appointing key officials and a lack of clear policy on Sudan led to the loss of momentum. Eventually, Sudan slipped back into a new kind of isolation — one that worsened after the war began in April 2023, with the collapse of state institutions and a deepening humanitarian crisis.

In contrast, Syria's opportunity comes at the start of Trump's second term, offering a longer period of policy stability — something Sudan never had. Both countries suffered from long-term international isolation, but Syria remained under strict US and European sanctions due to war crimes and human rights violations. However, there is now talk of limited contact with the new Al-Sharaa government — different from Sudan's case, where sanctions were fully lifted but not followed by sustained US engagement.

Still, missed chances do not mean new ones will not arise. Even today, Sudan remains relevant to regional dynamics. But in Washington's current view, Sudan is often framed primarily as a humanitarian crisis rather than being understood in broader strategic terms, such as counterterrorism, Red Sea maritime security or competition with Russia and Iran.

Sudan's internal and

external actions are watched in Washington, especially when they intersect with US priorities in the region. Its geographic position — between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Red Sea — gives it significant geostrategic weight. But it is not always presented or perceived as such within American policy circles. Whether it is seen as a strategic actor or a marginal one often depends on how it is framed — and by whom. Moves like military ties with Iran and allowing a Russian naval base in Port Sudan have sent signals that complicate views of Sudan's alignment. These developments tend to raise concerns in US policy discussions about the country's long-term reliability, especially in the context of Red Sea security and broader US strategic interests.

From Washington's perspective, countries that align with American-led frameworks of regional stability, including security cooperation, openness and diplomacy, are more likely to be viewed as potential partners. Those that appear to lean toward confrontation or closer ties with adversarial powers may face more skepticism or reduced engagement. In this context, the signals received from Sudan's actions, whether deliberate or unintended, shape the space available for US engagement.

Additionally, countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar — as well

as Egypt — are viewed as key intermediaries or influencers in Sudan's trajectory. Their own relationships with Washington give them leverage and relevance when it comes to shaping perceptions of Sudan's future.

Looking back, Sudan may not have fully capitalized on the opening it received during Trump's first term. But that doesn't mean Washington has closed the door. Rather, a new opportunity — under different regional and international conditions — may still be possible. However, the logic here is less about whether Sudan deserves another chance and more about whether its political behavior signals readiness for one.

The fate of nations is not just shaped by opportunities offered, but also by how their actions are interpreted. Even in the midst of a complex crisis, countries can continue to generate interest in US policy circles, especially when their trajectory intersects with emerging American priorities such as securing Red Sea maritime routes, ensuring freedom of navigation, countering terrorism and arms smuggling, and pushing back against the expanding influence of Iran, Russia and China in Africa and along key trade corridors.

Ultimately, the question is not simply: Will another chance come? But rather: How is Sudan positioning itself in the eyes of Washington — and what signals will the US choose to respond to?

Manufacturing of an 'antinational' in India

Apoorvanand

PROFESSOR Ali K h a n Mahmudabad, a professor of political science at Ashoka University, has become the latest hate figure manufactured by Hindu nationalists in India with backing from the police and judiciary. A crime that Mahmudabad has not committed is being attributed to him, and he is now being asked to prove his innocence – a classic case of "guilty until proven innocent". The more he pleads his innocence, the deeper the suspicion grows against him as the Supreme Court of India has already cast doubt on his intent and made adverse observations about him before setting up a Special Investigative Team (SIT) to scrutinise two Facebook posts containing 1,530 words. Despite the clarity of his posts, Mahmudabad is expected to explain himself and dispel suspicions created by the highest court in the land.

In these posts, Mahmudabad criticised Pakistan for harbouring terrorists while praising India's military action against its neighbour. He highlighted the applause received by two female military officers – one of them Muslim – who presented India's case on the global stage. However, he warned that if the daily persecution of Muslims in India did not cease, these optics of inclusivity would remain mere hypocrisy.

What Mahmudabad wrote had been expressed by countless others before him in different ways. Yet suddenly, Renu Bhatia, the head of the Women's Commission of Haryana, appeared fuming at a news conference, accusing Mahmudabad of insulting the two female officers. Her charges left many bewildered. Mahmudabad responded through his lawyers, explaining his posts thoroughly. But Bhatia was unsatisfied, even if failing to substantiate her allegations.

When questioned by a TV anchor to identify specific words or sentences demeaning to the female officers, she could find none. Still, she insisted that her feelings of offence were sufficient proof that something must be wrong with Mahmudabad's posts – that he must have written something horrible. She argued it wasn't her job to pinpoint offensive phrases; it was the police's responsibility to uncover what might offend her.

After her accusations, Mahmudabad's posts underwent intense scrutiny by numerous individuals and media outlets. No distasteful or insulting content was found. Academics and members of civil society rallied behind Mahmudabad, expressing outrage over the actions of the Women's Commission.

When the absurdity of Bhatia's claims became public fodder, a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the ruling Hindu nationalist party, filed a complaint with the Haryana police, alleging that Mahmudabad had said something hurtful to him and others. Referring to the same Facebook posts, the complainant claimed they offended him. Taking his grievance seriously, the police charged Mahmudabad with serious offences, including inciting enmity between religious groups, offending the religious sentiments of a community and outraging the modesty of women. Mahmudabad was promptly arrested.

Confident that a careful reading of his writings would expose the baselessness of the charges, Mahmudabad's lawyers approached the Supreme Court to seek his release and a stay on the police investigation. Before the hearing, however, 200 academics, including vice chancellors and heads of academic institutions, issued a statement urging the court to take a hard line against him. They accused Mahmudabad of trying to "destabilise communal harmony, undermine institutional integrity, and erode gender equity". They described his posts as "veiled misogyny cloaked in pseudo-academic inquiry" and urged the Supreme Court to consider their broader socio-legal implications.

During the hearing, Mahmudabad's lawyer read aloud the posts in question. The court responded sceptically, suggesting that his words carried double meanings and amounted to dog whistles. "Someone with an analytical mind will understand the language. ... The words used may seem innocuous but can target unintended audiences," the bench remarked.

The Supreme Court then constituted an SIT comprising three senior police officers to "understand the complexity and properly appreciate the language used in the posts". Thus, the Supreme Court's orders created the impression that Mahmudabad's words could not be accepted at face value. While his statements might appear benign, there must be some hidden meaning or ulterior motive lurking beneath the surface.

Public reaction to the court delegating its interpretive duties to the police was one of shock. Was it so difficult for the court to read, analyse and interpret the posts itself? Did the members of the court not have analytical minds to read and understand what was written by Mahmudabad? Was this not their job? Or was the court shying away from committing itself to a position?

The SIT will operate under the shadow of the presumptions made by the court, which already lean against Mahmudabad. How can he possibly dispel such preconceived notions? Meanwhile, the fog around Mahmudabad thickens. Details of his family background, devout Muslim identity, ancestral ties to Pakistan and foreign travels are being investigated by the police. These factors will now serve as the context in which his posts are to be read and interpreted. The media are busy demonising Mahmudabad.

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The media are busy demonising Mahmudabad. Soon, his actual words will vanish into the dense fog of propaganda, replaced by the image of a devious, cunning, scheming Muslim etched into the collective Hindu imagination.

Mahmudabad has appeared before the SIT. Meanwhile, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the BJP, has announced plans for a public demonstration against him. It is asking Ashoka University to sack him because he has written "antinational posts". The mouth organ of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the parent body of the ruling BJP and ABVP, has also joined the chorus asking for action against Mahmudabad.

We see the same playbook unfolding – the one used to vilify scholars like Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, turning them into enemy figures within the BJP ecosystem with the help of the media, police and judiciary.

One can only hope that the police officers remain steadfast, unaffected by judicial remarks or shrill propaganda and read Mahmudabad's plain lines with constitutional eyes. His words – crafted by a Muslim mind – call for empathy, understanding, justice, equality and dignity.

— Aljazeera

Tariffs, and Trump’s entire economic agenda, were just thrown into chaos

David Goldman, Phil Mattingly and Matt Egan

A US federal court’s ruling late Wednesday against President Donald Trump’s authority to levy some of his most sweeping tariffs may have also dealt a serious blow to the president’s entire economic agenda.

Trump’s core economic policy has been his historic tariffs, but the administration has described its aggressive trade actions as just one leg of a three-legged stool. Built on tariffs, spending cuts and tax cuts, Trump’s economic agenda relies on all three components to stand strong.

But a three-judge panel at the US Court of International Trade blocked Trump’s global tariffs, which he imposed citing emergency economic powers. Those trade actions include the “Liberation Day” tariffs, 10% universal tariffs and the tariffs aimed at preventing fentanyl from entering the United States.

The three-legged economic stool just lost a leg, at least for now. The court, in its ruling, noted Trump has alternate, if imperfect, tools at his disposal to impose tariffs — tools that multiple White House officials told CNN they are considering and that economists widely expect the administration to make use of in the coming days. The Trump administration has appealed and plans to take the case all the way to the Supreme Court if need be, even as it hopes for an emergency stay, the officials said.

There is no sense that the court ruling will lead the administration to change course. Between appeals and alternatives, Trump will probably double-down on his trade efforts, according to allies inside and outside the White House. “The courts are a pretty obvious foil across the board and we haven’t backed down on anything else so far,” one official said.

But the historically massive scope of Trump’s tariff policy was nevertheless thrown into doubt by the court’s ruling. And uncertainty surrounding the tariffs, Trump’s whole economic policy plan could come crashing down.

Trump’s tariffs have persuaded dozens of US trading partners to come to the table to make deals. In theory, those trade deals could open up foreign markets to more US goods, benefitting US manufacturers and farmers. White House officials expressed significant concern about what the ruling means for the administration’s ongoing

bilateral talks, including two agreements that two senior White House advisers said were close to being announced as soon as this week. Officials started making calls to counterparts Wednesday night to emphasize that, in their minds, nothing had changed and that process and urgency should be maintained.

But trading partners may want to hang back to assess the situation before resuming negotiations. “It’s clear they don’t

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want to lose any momentum, but it’s not exactly obvious why everyone wouldn’t take a beat to figure out what this all means,” one diplomat involved in his country’s talks told CNN.

One former senior administration was blunter about the impact of the decision.

“This blows a hole in their entire strategy at the absolute worst time,” the former official told CNN.

Revenue from Trump’s tariffs, meanwhile, could, at least in part, help pay for Trump’s and congressional Republicans’ massively expensive tax cuts, which could boost economic growth and add certainty for financial markets by raising the debt ceiling. Trump’s deregulation and spending cuts, particularly via the Department of Government Efficiency, could also reduce the government’s costs and negate some of the impact of the tax cuts on the surging federal debt.

Because of its fragile construction, Trump’s plan to usher in a new economic Golden Age has plenty of naysayers, including most mainstream economists, who argue that the administration lacks the discipline, authority and political support to make it happen. The on-again, off-again trade policy, legal battles over DOGE and intraparty standoffs on the “Big, Beautiful Bill” serve as evidence.

Elon Musk, one of Trump’s biggest financial backers who was the

public face of Trump’s DOGE team, criticized the bill this week, saying the legislation’s massive additions to America’s debt effectively undermined the cost-cutting group’s efforts. Now, with the potential for no tariff component to Trump’s agenda, Republican deficit hawks in Congress may not support Trump’s tax cuts. Many were already extremely nervous about the bill’s nearly \$4 trillion price tag — with around \$1 trillion in unpopular cuts to

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Medicaid. “Increased revenues from tariffs (approximately \$150 billion per year) could have helped offset some of the deficit from the reconciliation package,” Aniket Shah, head of sustainability and transition strategy at Jefferies, wrote in a note to clients Wednesday. With the legal outcome now uncertain, Shah said, Trump and Republicans may be forced to settle for reduced tax cuts or increased spending cuts to advance the House-approved bill through the reconciliation process with the Senate. “Let’s not forget that one justification behind current trade tensions was not only the US trade balance deficit but also the search for additional government revenues,” said Inga Fechner, senior economist at ING, in a note to clients. “The lack of which would further fuel the current debt (un)sustainability debate.” There are more questions than answers at this point. “It does raise questions about how the administration will respond and how this affects, if at all, the tax package going through Congress,” noted Keith Lerner, co-chief investment officer at Trust Advisory Services. White House National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett said Wednesday on Fox Business News that the administration is so confident it will win the appeal that it is not pur-

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suing alternative measures for now. But if need be, “there are three or four other ways to do it,” he said. “There are different approaches that would take a couple of months to put these in place and using procedures that have been approved in the past,” he added. The administration’s alternate pathways to imposing its tariffs and avoid legal scrutiny could include using Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act, which was unaffected by the

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investigations but ultimately still allow the president to act unilaterally.” Even as the administration scrambles to adjust its trade policy and as its appeal makes its way through the legal system — perhaps to the Supreme Court — Wednesday’s ruling could undermine Trump’s much-sought trade deals with foreign partners. Those deals have been sparse, even with just over a month to go in the three-month pause of Trump’s “reciprocal” tariffs. The administration

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has announced frameworks of deals with only the UK and China. “We believe one reason bilateral negotiations had stalled was that US trading partners may have anticipated this outcome,” said Shah. “Will they now view trade negotiations as a matter to be resolved by the courts, or will they re-engage with the US on trade policy?” The setback for Trump’s agenda, however, may be temporary. For businesses, the court’s ruling provides little certainty — particularly because of the administration’s appeal. “If anything, the ruling supercharges the uncertainty already facing businesses and consumers, because it’s the first hint of a possibility that ... tariffs could be eliminated entirely,” said the Yale Budget Lab’s Ernie Tedeschi. “But even if they were, the Administration could try to raise tariffs using other authorities. The potential outcomes just got much more uncertain in both directions — lower or higher tariffs.”

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The future of American soft power

Joseph S. Nye Jr.

had won the Second World War and imposed their values.

While prior US presidents have violated aspects of the liberal order, Donald Trump is the first to reject the idea that soft power has any value in foreign policy. Among his first actions upon returning to office was to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement and the World Health Organization, despite the obvious threats that climate change and pandemics pose.

The effects of a US administration surrendering soft power are all too predictable. Coercing democratic allies like Denmark or Canada weakens trust in our alliances. Threatening Panama reawakens fears of imperialism throughout Latin America. Crippling the US Agency for International Development — created by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 — undercuts our reputation for benevolence. Silencing Voice of America is a gift to

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After the Second World War, the US was by far the most powerful country and it attempted to enshrine its values in what became known as “the liberal international order” — a framework comprising the UN, the Bretton Woods economic institutions and other multilateral bodies. Of course, the US did not always live up to its liberal values and Cold War bipolarity limited this order to only half the world’s people. But the postwar system would have looked very different if the Axis powers had won the Second World War and imposed their values. While prior US presidents have violated aspects of the liberal order, Donald Trump is the first to reject the idea that soft power has any value in foreign policy. Among his first actions upon returning to office was to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement and the World Health Organization, despite the obvious threats that climate change and pandemics pose. The effects of a US administration surrendering soft power are all too predictable. Coercing democratic allies like Denmark or Canada weakens trust in our alliances. Threatening Panama reawakens fears of imperialism throughout Latin America. Crippling the US Agency for International Development — created by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 — undercuts our reputation for benevolence.

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authoritarian rivals. Slapping tariffs on friends makes us appear unreliable. Trying to chill free speech at home undermines our credibility. This list could go on. Trump has defined China as America’s great challenge and China itself has been investing in soft power since 2007, when then-President Hu Jintao told the Communist Party of China that the country needed to make itself more attractive to others. But China has long faced two major obstacles in this respect. First, it maintains territorial disputes with multiple neighbors. Second, the party insists on maintaining tight control over civil society. The costs of such policies have been confirmed by public opinion polls that ask people around the world which countries they find attractive. But one can only wonder what these surveys will show in future years if Trump keeps undercutting American soft power.

To be sure, American

soft power has had its ups and downs over the years. The US was unpopular in many countries during the Vietnam and Iraq wars. But soft power derives from a country’s society and culture, as well as from government actions. Even during the Vietnam War, when crowds marched through streets around the world to protest US policies, they sang the American civil rights anthem “We Shall Overcome.” An open society that allows protest can be a soft power asset. But will America’s cultural soft power survive a downturn in the government’s soft power over the next four years?

American democracy is likely to survive four years of Trump. The country has a resilient political culture and a federal constitution that encourages checks and balances. There is a reasonable chance that Democrats will regain control of the House of Representatives in the 2026 midterm elections. Moreover, civil society remains strong and the

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authoritarian rivals. Slapping tariffs on friends makes us appear unreliable. Trying to chill free speech at home undermines our credibility. This list could go on. Trump has defined China as America’s great challenge and China itself has been investing in soft power since 2007, when then-President Hu Jintao told the Communist Party of China that the country needed to make itself more attractive to others. But China has long faced two major obstacles in this respect. First, it maintains territorial disputes with multiple neighbors. Second, the party insists on maintaining tight control over civil society. The costs of such policies have been confirmed by public opinion polls that ask people around the world which countries they find attractive. But one can only wonder what these surveys will show in future years if Trump keeps undercutting American soft power.

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courts independent. Many organizations have launched lawsuits to challenge Trump’s actions and markets have signaled dissatisfaction with Trump’s economic policies.

American soft power recovered after low points in the Vietnam and Iraq wars, as well as from a dip in Trump’s first term. But once trust is lost, it is not easily restored. After the invasion of Ukraine, Russia lost most of what soft power it had, but China is striving to fill any gaps that Trump creates. The way Chinese President Xi Jinping tells it, the East is rising over the West. If Trump thinks he can compete with China while weakening trust among American allies, asserting imperial aspirations, destroying USAID, silencing Voice of America, challenging laws at home and withdrawing from UN agencies, he is likely to fail. Restoring what he has destroyed will not be impossible, but it will be costly.

Born in the USA and why soon that may not matter

THERE is a scene in the hysterically funny 2009 movie “In the Loop” in which the bellicose US military attache Lt. Gen. George Miller, played by the late James Gandolfini, accosts Malcolm Tucker, the foul-mouthed British government spin doctor played by the Scottish actor Peter Capaldi.

In the course of a lengthy tirade, Miller denounces the general uselessness and wimpishness of England, all things English and particularly English people as exemplified by Tucker. The spin doctor essays a few ripostes about armchair generals who have never fired a weapon in anger, turns to leave, but then turns back and snarls: “And not ever call me ***** English again!”

Anyone with sufficient comedic talent could have written and directed the movie, but only a Scot could have written and directed that scene. The Scot in question is Armando Iannucci, a comedy genius who you may know from “Veep,” the TV series in which he mercilessly skewered the dysfunctional incompetence of White House politics, having previously done the same for the UK with “The

Thick of It.”

His name, obviously, denotes Italian heritage, but Iannucci is very much a product of Scotland — as am I: we share a home city, Glasgow, and indeed a school, although 10 years apart. If someone were to suggest that either of us was in any way English, they would be on the receiving end of a mouthful that would put Malcolm Tucker to shame.

Nationality is, above all, an emotion. Citizenship is a bureaucratic process. Taken together, they create a powerful force that determines who we are as people. They are, for example, why Palestinians, despite oppression, persecution and a diaspora scattered to the four winds, remain resolutely and indefatigably Palestinian (and why cruel attempts to drive them out of the West Bank, and absurd attempts to do so from Gaza, are doomed to fail).

They are why, despite incomprehension in the US, there was widespread irritation in South America when the new Pope Leo was described as “the first American pope,” despite having succeeded the proud Argentine and also proud American Pope Francis. As they say south of the Mexican border,

“todos somos Americanos” (we are all American).

You would think, therefore, that nationality and citizenship were a straightforward business, but we live in a world where increasingly they are not. Particularly in the US and Western Europe, the shut-

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The logic of those who oppose migration has always eluded me. Where do they think they came from in the first place? We all know, but it bears repeating for those who have clearly forgotten, that the US became the world’s preeminent power wholly on the back of unlimited and uncontrolled immigration, with attempts to limit it desultory. There were a few mostly anti-Asian rules in the late 19th century, but the

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immigration processing center on Ellis Island was not established until 1892 and migrant quotas and the US Border Patrol had to wait until 1924 — by which time the US was already on a roll. Nor were the early settlers squeamish about their methods: the predecessors of today’s US citizens ethnically cleansed the indigenous population from their ancestral land and claimed it as their own because it was their “manifest destiny” to do so, a scenario that observers of the West

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Ross Anderson

Bank today may find depressingly familiar. Since 1898, any child born in the US has been automatically entitled to US citizenship, regardless of the legal status of the child’s parents. In almost

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the first act of the first day of his second term as president, Donald Trump signed an executive order directing that the children of immigrants would no longer receive citizenship unless one of their parents was naturalized or had a green card. Trump did not do that on a whim: polling overwhelmingly suggests that, after retail price inflation, an “invasion” of undocumented migrants is the issue that most concerns Americans.

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Anti-immigrant sentiment is least fervent in states where you might expect to find it — California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, all of which share a border with Mexico on the main migrant route from the south. The very good reason is that business,

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industry and agriculture in those states would collapse without a steady supply of migrant labor, legal or otherwise, and employers are not inclined to ask too many awkward questions. To find genuine anger over illegal immigration, you need to go to the old industrial Midwest of Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania — where factory workers from Venezuela are few and far between. There are echoes here of Brexit, the 2016 vote for the UK to leave

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the EU, which was fueled largely by demands for more control over immigration — demands that came mostly from parts of England where actual migrants are as rare as hen’s teeth.

With his attempt to end birthright citizenship, Trump has effectively tried to overturn the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, adopted in 1868 and reinforced by the Supreme Court 30 years later, which states: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States.”

Most US legal scholars consider that to be unequivocal and Trump’s executive order has been successfully challenged and overturned in most states. The Supreme Court is currently hearing arguments from the Trump administration that a judge may block a presidential order only in their own jurisdiction and not nationwide, but that is a technical issue that need not concern us here. What seems inevitable is that, probably early next year, the court will be asked to rule on the central issue itself — birthright citizenship.

On the face of it, it seems a simple decision:

the 14th Amendment could not be clearer. But one of the thornier tasks given to the Supreme Court is to interpret laws regulating circumstances and behavior that were markedly different when the laws were written from what they are now, and to judge what the framers of those laws might have thought had they known then what we know now. For example, an estimated 20,000 women a year, mostly from China, travel to the US specifically to give birth there and gain citizenship for their children. “Birth tourism” was hardly a thing in 1868: should it be encouraged now?

Supporting his executive order is certainly what Trump will expect the court to do, but no one ever made money betting on how a Supreme Court justice will rule — not even the president who nominated them. The judges have a long history of applying their own interpretation of the law, not the political views that a president thought he was sending them to the bench to implement.

Either way, our whole understanding of nationality and citizenship may be about to change: watch this space.

— Arab News



Pakistan launches first sovereign Green Sukuk

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The government of Pakistan, with strategic support from Meezan Bank and the Pakistan Stock Exchange, has launched its first sovereign Green Sukuk-marking a significant advancement in sustainable and Shariah-compliant public financing. Meezan Bank played a central role in this landmark issuance, serving as Joint Financial and Shariah Advisor. In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the Bank was instrumental in developing the Sustainable Investment (SI) Sukuk Framework, which was approved by the federal cabinet in April 2025. The framework aligns with international best practices and

integrates both the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Maqasid-e-Shariah.

To support market readiness and investor participation, Meezan Bank conducted a series of information sessions and webinars, engaging Non-Resident Pakistanis, financial institutions, asset management companies, and ESG-focused investors. The Bank also collaborated with Dubai Islamic Bank Pakistan, Bank Islami, and Bank Alfalah Islamic to ensure full compliance with Shariah principles and uphold the structural integrity of the transaction.

A ceremony was held at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) to commemorate the launch, attended by

Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Finance Minister; Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Chairperson, PSX; and Irfan Siddiqui, Founding President & CEO of Meezan Bank.

The Rs.30 billion issuance received an overwhelming response, with bids exceeding Rs. 161 billion-an oversubscription of 5.4 times within two hours. In view of the strong demand, the issue size was raised to Rs. 31.98 billion. The auction was conducted via the Pakistan Stock Exchange and executed by the Pakistan Domestic Sukuk Company Limited, a wholly owned entity of the Ministry of Finance.

The Green Sukuk is a three-year Ijarah-based instrument, offering semi-annual rental returns. It is

fully tradable on the Pakistan Stock Exchange and qualifies for Statutory Liquidity Requirement (SLR). With a minimum investment of PKR 5,000, the issuance was designed to encourage broad participation, including retail investors, institutions, and Roshan Digital Account (RDA) holders.

Proceeds will finance selected green infrastructure projects, including the Garuk Storage Dam in Kharan, Naigaj Dam in Dadu (Sindh), and the 26MW Shagarthang Hydro-power Project in Skardu. These initiatives aim to improve water resource management, expand renewable energy capacity, and strengthen climate resilience in underserved areas.

Emirates Pakistan, Consulate of Italy Ink Partnership

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Emirates, the world's largest international airline, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Consulate of Italy in Karachi to seamlessly facilitate diplomatic travel and promote cultural and business ties between Pakistan and Italy in Karachi.

The MOU was signed by Mohammed Alhashmi, Emirates' Vice President for Pakistan, and Fabrizio Bielli, the Consul of Italy, during a signing ceremony held at the Consulate in Karachi. Under the agreement, Emirates will become the preferred airline for official travel by the Italian Consulate. The airline will offer exclusive benefits to diplomatic passengers, including preferential fares, cargo rates, and additional baggage allowances.

Emirates will also explore opportunities to support diplomatic and cultural events organized by the Italian Consulate, as well as promotions for



business engagements in Italy related with the Italian Consulate. In return, the Italian Consulate will recommend Emirates to individuals and entities engaging with the Consulate for travel to and from Italy.

Mohammed Alhashmi, Emirates' Vice President for Pakistan said: "We are pleased to collaborate with the Consulate of Italy in Karachi. Italy is an important market for us, and we have been operating there for over three decades. This MoU reflects our shared

commitment of enhancing and fostering stronger cultural and economic ties between our nations. We look forward to facilitating travel for personnel in Italy's diplomatic mission, so they have the opportunity to explore our diverse network as they strengthen their cultural connections in Pakistan."

The Consul, Fabrizio Bielli, added: "This partnership with Emirates will greatly benefit our diplomatic community and strengthen the bridge between Italy and

Pakistan. We look forward to the opportunities this collaboration will bring."

Emirates has a longstanding presence in Pakistan and Italy, operating over 50 weekly flights to five cities in Pakistan: Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, and Sialkot as well as operating 42 weekly flights to Milan, Rome, Venice and Bologna. The airline continues to play a pivotal role in connecting both nations to the world, supporting both passenger travel and cargo services.

Neem expands insurance footprint with a strategic partnership with TPL Life



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Neem, Pakistan's leading embedded finance platform, is deepening its footprint in the insurance sector with a new strategic partnership with TPL Life, a digital-first insurance leader serving over 1 million + customers across Pakistan. This collaboration follows Neem's recently announced partnership with TPL Life and signals the company's continued momentum in transforming insurance through embedded financial infrastructure.

The partnership with TPL Life advances Neem's mission to digitise the full insurance value chain-from premium collection to claim disbursement-using its low-code, scalable, com-

pliant payments and wallet infrastructure.

"This partnership with TPL Life is a continuation of what we've set out to do-build the financial rails for insurance in Pakistan," said Shehrez Bawany, Head of Partnerships at Neem. "Together, we're delivering on our promise to help insurers modernise rapidly, and there's more to come."

A two-phase embedded finance solution for insurance

Through Neem's embedded finance stack, TPL Life will roll out a two-phase digital finance solution to elevate its customer experience and operational agility.:

Phase 1: Premium collections made seamless
Neem's Payment Button

is integrated into TPL's digital platforms, enabling policyholders to pay premiums through cards, bank transfers, wallets, and 1Bill. TPL's team will also gain access to real-time reporting and insights through the Neem Business Portal.

At TPL Life, we're committed to efficient, frictionless digital customer experiences," said Saad Nissar, CEO TPL Life. "Partnering with Neem allows us to offer fast, transparent, and modern payment journeys-embedded directly into how we engage with our customers.

Phase 2: Wallet-powered claims and engagement

Neem will enable white-labeled wallet infrastructure to support:

Instant digital claims disbursements

Direct wallet-based purchases for the TPL customers

Customers to store and top up funds through multiple channels

Loyalty and rewards integration for deeper engagement

This next-generation solution improves the customer experience whilst allowing TPL Life to drive innovation throughout the entire lifecycle of the policyholder.

Delivering on the promise of enabling insurance in Pakistan

With this partnership, Neem strengthens its position as the go-to infrastructure partner for Pakistan's insurance industry. Having partnered with two of the country's top insurers-EFU Life and TPL Life - Neem is actively shaping a new digital standard in how insurance is delivered and experienced.

This is just the beginning. Neem continues to expand its partnerships with insurance players nationwide, creating a robust, embedded ecosystem that improves access, transparency, and financial wellness across Pakistan.

Lucky Cement hosts eye care camp

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Lucky Cement Limited in collaboration with Al Shifa trust organized a three-day Eye Care Camp for the general public at its Pezu Plant from May 26 to 28, 2025, as part of its community welfare initiatives.

A total of 1,563 patients were treated during the camp, which provided eye check-ups, vision assessments, prescription glasses, and treatment for common eye conditions. Patients requiring further care were referred to specialized facilities. A team of qualified ophthalmologists and support staff ensured quality care. Free medicines and eyeglasses were also distributed to those in need.

The camp offered much-needed medical support to residents of Pezu and surrounding areas, improving access to essential eye care services.

PSX stays bullish, gains 638 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 638.50 points, a positive change of 0.54 percent, closing at 118,971.41 points as compared to 118,332.91 points on the last trading day.

A total of 741,654,162 shares were traded during the day as compared to 690,389,276 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 23.911 billion against Rs 23.828 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 466 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 268 of them recorded gains and 159 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 39 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 137,517,831

shares at Rs 1.43 per share, K-Electric Limited with 119,635,956 shares at Rs 5.52 per share and PTCL with 65,676,043 shares at Rs 26.23 per share.

PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 2,427.65 per share closing at Rs26,704.13 whereas runner-up was Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs 230.64 rise in its share price to close at Rs 2,537.01

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 175.71 per share price, closing at Rs 10,108.33, whereas the runner-up Supernet Technologies Limited with Rs 66.88 decline in its per share price to Rs 818.69.

Rupee gains 11 paise against US Dollar: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 11 paise against the US Dollar in the inter-

bank trading and closed at Rs 282.06 against the previous day's closing of Rs 282.17.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.65 and Rs 284.30, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.06 to close at Rs 318.10 against the last day's closing of Rs 320.16, according to SBP.

The Japanese yen came down by 02 pasia and closed at Rs1.94, whereas a decrease of Rs 2.02 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 379.81 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 381.83. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 03 paise each to close at Rs 76.79 and Rs 75.20, respectively.

SNGPL issues notices to defaulting consumers

— various federal and provincial departments owe more than Rs.3.7136 billion to SNGPL

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has issued reminder notices to several public sector organizations and departments for the payment of long-outstanding dues. The company urges all such public sector entities to settle their dues immediately to avoid further legal or administrative action. Final notices have been served to these defaulters during April 2025.

Among the defaulters, government hospitals owe a substantial amount. Hospitals under the Federal Government owe Rs. 183.62 million, those under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government owe Rs. 106.08 million, and Punjab Government hospitals owe Rs. 1.1228 billion. The total outstanding dues from these hospitals amount to Rs. 1.4125 billion.

Police departments are also among the major defaulters. The Federal Police owe Rs. 141.5 million, KPK Police owe Rs. 63.13 million, and Punjab Police owe Rs. 295.04 million, bringing the total outstanding dues from police departments to Rs. 499.7 million.

In the prison sector, jails in KPK owe Rs. 38.58 million, while those in Punjab owe Rs. 569 million. The total outstanding dues from jails come to Rs. 607.5 million.

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) of the Federal Government owes Rs. 251.2 million.

The Public Works Department (PWD) is a major defaulter. The Federal PWD owes Rs. 118.46 million, KPK PWD owes Rs. 5.028 million, and Punjab PWD owes Rs. 18.114 million. The combined outstanding dues from all PWDs total Rs. 141.6 million.

Educational institutions have also accumulated unpaid dues. Federal institutions owe Rs. 65.58 million, KPK institutions owe Rs. 17.14 million, and Punjab institutions owe Rs. 32.554 million. The total outstanding dues from educational institutions stand at Rs. 115.28 million.

Miscellaneous government institutions owe substantial amounts as well. Federal institutions owe Rs. 198.88 million, those in KPK owe Rs. 76.92 million, and Punjab-based institutions owe Rs. 410 million. The total outstanding dues in this category amount to Rs. 685.8 million.

Defaulter Names and Outstanding Amounts

The Commandant Police, Training College Sihala, Islamabad, owes Rs. 146.37 million. M/s General Hospital, Ferozepur Road, Lahore,

has outstanding dues of Rs. 97.74 million. The Executive Engineer (XEN), Punjab House, Sector F-5, Islamabad, owes Rs. 89.21 million. The Medical Superintendent, Surgical Tower, Mayo Hospital, Lahore, is liable for Rs. 85.7 million.

The Deputy Director, Mechanical Division 2 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Room No. 1, Block Q, Pak Secretariat Building, Islamabad, for Pak House, owes Rs. 61.66 million. Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), G-8/3, Islamabad, has dues of Rs. 61.4 million. The Superintendent Jail, Central Jail, Gujranwala, owes Rs. 60.99 million. The Medical Director, Children Hospital, Ferozepur Road, Lahore, owes Rs. 60.3 million.

The Medical Superintendent of Surgical Ward, ENT Ward, and Medical Wards No. 1 and 2, Bahawal Victoria Hospital, Bahawalpur, has outstanding dues of Rs. 55.21 million. The Assistant Executive Engineer, PM House Complex, Islamabad, owes Rs. 51.76 million. The Superintendent, Adyala Jail, Rawalpindi, is liable for Rs. 49.67 million. The Medical Superintendent, District Headquarters Hospital, Mianwali Road, Sargodha, owes Rs. 44.26 million.

The Medical Superintendent, Services Hospital, Jail Road, Lahore, has dues of Rs. 42.06 million. The Superintendent Jail, Cook of Food for Inmates, Multan, owes Rs. 40.88 million. The Deputy Director, Mechanical Division No. 1, CDA, Islamabad, for the Prime Minister Secretariat, owes Rs. 40.39 million. The Superintendent Jail, District Jail, Lahore, is liable for Rs. 40.28 million. The Director, Poultry Farms, Murree Road, Rawalpindi, has dues of Rs. 39.83 million. The Airport Security Force at the New Islamabad International Airport owes Rs. 39.57 million. The Medical Superintendent, Services Hospital, Radiology Department, Jail Road, Lahore, owes Rs. 38.46 million. The Medical Superintendent, New OPD Block, Services Hospital, Lahore, owes Rs. 38.25 million.

The Medical Superintendent, Children Hospital, Abdali Road, Chowk Fawara, Multan, is liable for Rs. 37.59 million. The Medical Superintendent, Modern Burn Unit, Nishtar Hospital, owes Rs. 37.29 million. The Administrator, Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar, has dues of Rs. 36.37 million. The Deputy Director, E/M Maintenance Division, Parliament House, CDA Islamabad, owes Rs. 34.84 million. The Medical Superintendent, Jinnah Hospital,

New Campus, Lahore, owes Rs. 34.66 million. M/s Mayo Hospital, Lahore, has outstanding dues of Rs. 34.18 million. The Deputy Director, Air-conditioning, CDA Secretariat, M Block, Islamabad, owes Rs. 34.07 million. The Superintendent Jail, Central Jail, Residential Colony, High Security Prison, Mianwali, is liable for Rs. 29.22 million.

The Superintendent Jail, Central Jail, Kot Lakhpat, Lahore, owes Rs. 28.86 million. The Deputy Director, Mechanical Division 2, Room No. 1, Block Q, Pak Secretariat Building, Islamabad, for Block K, owes Rs. 28.50 million. Lady Wellington Hospital, Ravi Road, Lahore, has dues of Rs. 28.41 million. The Medical Superintendent, Laundry Plant, Nishtar Medical College, Multan, owes Rs. 27.42 million. The Deputy Director, Mechanical Division-I, Federal Government Services Hospital, G-6/3, Islamabad, is liable for Rs. 25.76 million. The Deputy Director (E/M), Maintenance Division, Parliament House, Islamabad, owes Rs. 25.17 million. The Superintendent, District Jail Mess, Shorkot Road, Toba Tek Singh, has outstanding dues of Rs. 24.19 million. The Medical Superintendent, Mayo Hospital, Lahore, Mayo Kitchen, owes Rs. 23.93 million.

The Rapid Response Force, ICT Police Secretariat, H-11/2, Islamabad, owes Rs. 23.17 million. The Medical Superintendent, T.H.Q. Hospital, Kuldana Road, Murree, has dues of Rs. 22.57 million. The Medical Superintendent, Operation T, Bahawal Victoria Hospital, Bahawalpur, owes Rs. 22.56 million. The Superintendent Jail, District Jail, Sheikhupura, is liable for Rs. 22.49 million. The Deputy Director, Mechanical Division-II, Room No. 1, Block Q, Pakistan Secretariat, Islamabad, for Govt Hostel, owes Rs. 22.43 million. The Medical Superintendent, General Hospital Plant Room, HVAC System near Hospital Masjid, Master Plan Phase-2, General Hospital, Lahore, owes Rs. 21.53 million. The Medical Superintendent, Rawalpindi General Hospital, Murree Road, Rawalpindi, owes Rs. 21.49 million.

The Medical Superintendent, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Lahore, has dues of Rs. 20.39 million. The Medical Superintendent, Laundry Plant, Bahawal Victoria Hospital, Bahawalpur, owes Rs. 20.22 million. The Resident Director, Sindh House, Islamabad, owes Rs. 19.55 million. The Superintendent Jail, District Jail,

Muzaffargarh, is liable for Rs. 19.23 million. The Administrator, Markaz-e-Tayyaba, GT Road, Muridke, owes Rs. 19.01 million. The Superintendent, New Central Jail, Stadium Road, Bahawalpur, has dues of Rs. 18.75 million. The Deputy Director, E/M Division, CDA Islamabad, for Aiwan-e-Saddar, owes Rs. 18.65 million. The Medical Superintendent, DHQ Hospital, Abbottabad, Post Code 22010, is liable for Rs. 18.15 million. The Medical Superintendent, Lahore General Hospital, Ferozepur Road, Lahore, owes Rs. 17.76 million. The SDO Baluchistan, House F-5/2, Agha Khan Road, Islamabad, owes Rs. 17.64 million.

District Central Prison, Hafizabad, owes Rs. 17.41 million, while the Superintendent Jail, District Jail Faisalabad, has dues of Rs. 17.12 million. The Medical Superintendent of New District Headquarters Hospital, Haripur, owes Rs. 16.89 million. Superintendent Jail, District Jail Sargodha, owes Rs. 16.42 million, and Police Training College Hangu has dues of Rs. 16.30 million. The SDO BMCW Superintendent, Central Jail Abbottabad (Post Code 22010), owes Rs. 14.98 million, followed by Superintendent New Central Jail Multan (Family Jail), Rs. 14.48 million. The Assistant Director, P.D. PIU-FSA, Home Department, Forensic Science Laboratory Lahore, owes Rs. 14.29 million.

The Deputy Director E/M CDA, Capital Hospital Surgical Block G-6/2 Islamabad, owes Rs. 14.04 million. The Deputy Director Works III (E&M), Police Barrack No.1, Diplomatic Enclave G-5 Islamabad, owes Rs. 13.88 million. The Executive Engineer, CEM DIV-I, Pak PWD, F-5 Islamabad, owes Rs. 13.83 million. Superintendent District Jail, Kitchen Use Khanawal owes Rs. 13.69 million, and Project Director, Islamabad Hospital Complex, F-6/2 Islamabad, owes Rs. 13.52 million. District Superintendent Jail, Kitchen Block Attack, owes Rs. 13.40 million, with Superintendent of Jail Rahim Yar Khan owing Rs. 13.10 million.

The Govt Mental Hospital, Gulberg Road Lahore, owes Rs. 12.98 million, XEN Northern Area House, F-5/1 Islamabad, Rs. 12.86 million, and the Medical Superintendent District Hospital Muzaffargarh owes Rs. 12.84 million. The SSP Police Lines Barracks Chakwal owes Rs. 12.60 million. UCH Gulberg-III Lahore owes Rs. 12.34 million. Superintendent District Jail

Sialkot owes Rs. 12.05 million, District Jail Multan owes Rs. 11.85 million, and District Jail Kasur owes Rs. 11.51 million. M/s Lady Aitchison Hospital Lahore owes Rs. 11.32 million. Executive Engineer E/M 5 Chamba House Lahore owes Rs. 11.26 million, Deputy Director CDA Police Station F-7 Markaz Islamabad owes Rs. 11.18 million, and Medical Superintendent (Incinerator), DHQ Hospital Kasur owes Rs. 11.10 million. The Medical Superintendent, A&E Block, Mayo Hospital Lahore, owes Rs. 10.98 million, with the Deputy Director (Planning), International Level Swimming Pool Lahore owing Rs. 10.65 million.

Superintendent District Jail Jhelum owes Rs. 10.63 million, District Jail Shahpur owes Rs. 10.35 million, and Zonal Administrator Auqaf Data Darbar Langar Khana Lahore owes Rs. 10.21 million, the same as Principal Services Institute Medical Sciences Lahore. The Incharge Police Lines Emergency Barracks Abbottabad owes Rs. 9.91 million, Deputy Director DRS Hostel G-6/2 Islamabad owes Rs. 9.84 million, SSP Mess Chung Lahore owes Rs. 9.75 million, Deputy Director Elec DIV CDA Police Lines H-11 Islamabad owes Rs. 9.63 million, and Deputy Director Electrical II CDA Heliport G-6/4 Islamabad owes Rs. 9.59 million.

The CEO of Wah General Hospital, Wah Cantt, owes Rs. 9.59 million, Semi-Permanent Police Barrack F-5 Islamabad owes Rs. 9.48 million, and SDO GOR-1 Hall Lahore owes Rs. 9.34 million. The Institute of Public Health, Birdwood Road, Lahore owes Rs. 9.23 million, Executive Engineer E/M Cardiac Surgery PIMS Islamabad owes Rs. 9.20 million, and Superintendent Jail District Jail Lodhran owes Rs. 9.04 million. MS Mayo Hospital Lahore owes Rs. 8.61 million, Deputy Director Works-III Police Barracks G-5 Islamabad owes Rs. 8.30 million, and Deputy Director Mech-IFGSH G-6/3 Islamabad owes Rs. 8.24 million.

Superintendent Jail Central Jail Sahiwal owes Rs. 8.18 million, District Jail Bahawalnagar owes Rs. 8.10 million, and Central Prison Mardan owes Rs. 7.97 million. SP Headquarters Traffic Police Manawan Lahore owes Rs. 7.77 million, Executive Director Child Health Centre PIMS owes Rs. 7.69 million, Headquarters Resident Colony Bahawalpur owes Rs. 7.68 million, and Director (Works) National Institute for Handicapped Islamabad

owes Rs. 7.55 million.

Superintendent Central Jail Peshawar owes Rs. 7.39 million, Deputy Director Works III Barrack II Diplomatic Enclave G-5 Islamabad owes Rs. 7.35 million, PIMS Hostel No. 142 Islamabad owes Rs. 7.17 million, and Superintendent Jail District Jail Vehari owes Rs. 7.06 million. NESPAK G-5/2 Islamabad owes Rs. 6.84 million, Estate Officer Punjab Assembly Lahore owes Rs. 6.73 million, and Medical Superintendent CH & ICH Multan owes Rs. 6.65 million. Deputy Director Electrical DIR-I CDA 20-Bed Hospital for Police Lines H-11 Islamabad owes Rs. 6.65 million. Superintendent Jail District Jail Gujrat owes Rs. 6.53 million, Medical Superintendent Orthopedic and Physiotherapy Ward Mayo Hospital Lahore owes Rs. 6.49 million, Tehsil Headquarters Tehsil Hospital Chichawatni owes Rs. 6.25 million, and Mess Police Lines Civil Lines Gujrat owes Rs. 6.19 million. SDO Building M Haseeb Khan S/O M Saleem Khan, Dolphin Police Lines HQ, Walton Road, Lahore owes Rs. 6.15 million.

Superintendent Jail (M/S Central Jail) Mianwali owes Rs. 6.06 million, XEN 2nd Provincial Division Kitchen Punjab House Rawalpindi Cantt owes Rs. 5.94 million, Managing Director Shamim Farm Residences Raiwind Road Lahore owes Rs. 5.90 million, and Principal Allama Iqbal College New Campus Lahore owes Rs. 5.81 million. Saif-Ullah Khalid Eidgah Saddar Lahore Cantt owes Rs. 5.70 million, Ahmed Naveed (District Jail Jhang) owes Rs. 5.63 million, and Semi-Permanent Police Barrack No. 4 F-6/3 Islamabad owes Rs. 5.50 million.

Superintendent of Police District Police Line Office GT Road Nowshera owes Rs. 5.45 million, Chief Security Officer Kuri Road Rawalpindi owes Rs. 5.39 million, M/s THQ Hospital Taxila owes Rs. 5.38 million, and SSP Police Office SSP Peshawar Cantt owes Rs. 5.25 million. Executive Engineer (Provincial Building Division) Sahiwal (Gas Kitchens for Prisoners and Staff at High Security Prison) owes Rs. 5.25 million, M/s Fatima Enterprises Ltd Shah Jamal Road Muzaffargarh owes Rs. 5.17 million, Superintendent of Police HQ H-11 Islamabad (VHF Control Police Station Aabpara) owes Rs. 5.12 million, and Deputy Medical Superintendent ENT Ward Women & Children's Hospital Abbottabad (Post Code 22010) owes Rs. 5.07 million.



Pakistan look to fine-tune new approach against deflated Bangladesh

LAHORE (ESPNCricinfo): The Mike Hesson era in Pakistan cricket began just about as well as could be expected, Pakistan's complete performance giving them a straightforward victory over Bangladesh. More than the result, it was the mindset Salman Agha's side took into the game that suggests it may be the start of something promising. Despite the loss of two early wickets and a sluggish start, the Pakistan batters continued to attack, and Nos. 3-6 produced scores between 31 and 56. Crucially, all of them boasted strike rates between 164 and 200, when traditionally an anchoring role in the middle may have chipped a chunk off their total.

Topping it up was a complete bowling performance, too. Bangladesh were never allowed to keep pace with the asking rate as Pakistan continued to bruise them with regular wickets. The returning Hasan Ali continued the form he produced in the PSL, his career-best figures of 5 for 30 the cherry on top of a perfect Pakistan start.

For Bangladesh, the picture is significantly less rosy. A bright start with the

ball was a false dawn as the visitors found themselves outplayed through much of the rest of the game. Most notably, it was their spinners - a skillset Bangladesh rightly take pride in - who found themselves rendered ineffective, Mahedi Hasan and Rishad Hossain leaking 91 in their eight overs.

With Pakistan adopting a big-hitting power game, Bangladesh will also be aware of how unfavourably their own appears to compare. Pakistan's bowling attack is by no means the most economical, but tellingly, Bangladesh appeared unable to take the attack to them early, consequently easing pressure off the bowlers. Flashes from captain Litton Das and Jaker Ali weren't nearly substantial enough and received little support from their team-mates as Bangladesh crumpled to defeat.

However, Pakistan's new system is still finding its feet, with the variance between a good performance and a poor one likely significant. Bangladesh's game style offers a more stable level of baseline performance, one that, should they reproduce in either of

the remaining games, could see them give Pakistan trouble.

The only downside for Pakistan during a fairly complete performance was Haris Rauf's figures of 0 for 36 in three. The Lahore Qalandars fast bowler had a difficult PSL in terms of economy, a poor run that appears to have continued into this series. Even when he bowled towards the tail-end of the game with the jeopardy taken out, he found himself being targeted by Jaker, and ended up as the most expensive fast bowler on either side. At his best, Haris has offered precious control in the middle and later overs of T20 innings, and for a more rounded bowling attack, Pakistan need him to rediscover that prowess.

Jaker Ali struck some meaty blows on Wednesday, once more confirming his growing stature as a gritty, aggressive cricketer.

His penchant for refusing to give up in difficult situations has seen regard for him improve within Bangladesh cricket circles, and in a side where big hitting is in short supply, Jaker fills a crucial hole. He is

also one of the few in-form batters in the side, and it would not be a surprise if he earns a promotion up the order.

Team news

While Pakistan may use this series to try things out, they may not want to tweak much after a well-rounded performance in the first game. If anything, Abbas Afridi may come in for Haris Rauf.

Pakistan (probable): 1 Fakhar Zaman, 2 Saim Ayub, 3 Mohammad Haris (wk), 4 Hasan Nawaz, 5 Salman Agha (capt), 6 Shadab Khan, 7 Khushdil Shah, 8 Faheem Ashraf, 9 Haris Rauf/Abbas Afridi, 10 Hasan Ali, 11 Abrar Ahmed

Bangladesh may want to bring Najmul Hossain Shanto back into the XI, but it isn't who played and who didn't that resulted in Wednesday's defeat so much as a flat performance across the board.

Bangladesh (probable): 1 Tanzid Hasan, 2 Parvez Hossain Emon, 3 Litton Das (capt), 4 Towhid Hridoy, 5 Jaker Ali (wk), 6 Shamim Hossain, 7 Mahedi Hasan, 8 Rishad Hossain, 9 Tanzim Hasan, 10 Hasan Mahmud, 11 Shoriful Islam



RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA : Matthew Tkachuk #19 of the Florida Panthers scores at 7:23 of the second period against Frederik Andersen #31 of the Carolina Hurricanes in Game Five of the Eastern Conference Final of the 2025 Stanley Cup Playoffs at Lenovo Center.

Gauff marches past Valentova into French Open third round

PARIS, May 29 (Reuters) - Second seed Coco Gauff moved into the French Open third round on Thursday by beating unseeded Czech Tereza Valentova 6-2 6-4 although the American did not have things all her own way. Gauff came under threat from the 18-year-old Valentova's powerful serve but found a way past her thanks to her relentless returning and powerful groundstrokes.

The 21-year-old took the opening set in 35 minutes but a string of service breaks, three in total, made the second a lot more competitive as her Czech opponent refused to go down quietly. Gauff, a finalist in Madrid and Rome this year, will next take on Marie Bouzkova.

Meanwhile, World number one Jannik Sinner sent Frenchman Richard Gasquet into retirement with a 6-3 6-0 6-4 hammering in the battle of generations at the French Open on Thursday to ease into the third round.

It was the second time in as many years in Paris that the 23-year-old beat local hero Gasquet, who said he would end his career that started over two decades ago and yielded 16 tour-level singles titles after his home Grand Slam.

With his team watching on in matching white T-shirts that read "Merci Richard" the 38-year-old soaked up his ovation and video messages from peers including Novak Djokovic and the recently retired Rafa Nadal on the big screen.

"I'd like to thank Jannik for his kindness and the player that he is and I know he'll have a great career," Gasquet said.

"I have great memories with all of you. You all sup-

ported me in defeat and victory ... I began playing in a club in the south and travelled and played across France. So I remember all the tournaments I played in, not just Roland Garros.

"We always had a welcome here that was extraordinary. I'd like to thank the federation. Tennis finishes for me today."

Gasquet, who made his French Open debut in 2002 when top seed Sinner was still in a crib, drew huge roars from the Court Philippe Chatrier crowd when he unleashed his single-handed backhand on the Italian early in the match.

Fans were slightly more subdued when Sinner raced ahead 4-1 and won the opening set, before they were almost silenced when he dished out a bagel in the next set to leave Gasquet with a mountain to climb.

Sinner faced more resistance in the first eight games of the next set as Gasquet mounted an unlikely comeback attempt, but he broke for a 5-4 lead and promptly closed out the match, before paying tribute to his opponent.

"We have a good relationship off the court. We're different generations, but it's your moment," Sinner said.

"Congrats to your family, your team. Without great people around each player, it's impossible to make such an incredible career. You played in such an incredible era of tennis and everyone will recognise you, even after your retirement."

Victory ensured U.S. and Australian Open champion Sinner became the first man born in 1990 or later to record 16 straight wins at Grand Slams. He will next play Czech Jiri

Lehecka.

American Jessica Pegula is usually more at home on private jets as she tours the world playing professional tennis but the French Open third seed took a fancy to public transportation in Paris this week and managed to fly under everyone's radar.

The 31-year-old Pegula, who is through to the third round in Paris, took a quick break from playing duties to take a ride on the French capital's Metro.

"Nobody recognised me," she told a press conference. "Nobody recognised me at all. Nobody cared in that sense."

Pegula, whose parents are billionaires, gave the French subway the thumbs up.

"It was definitely very nice, very clean," she said. "A lot more relaxed than when I took the subway in New York. That's, like, an experience. A lot of entertainment," she said.

"It was a good experience. I want to see if I can maybe take some players or something and do a couple of those in the future and just see what happens, get everybody taking the Metro." The world number three used the New York subway during last year's U.S. Open to cut down on travel time in the congested city. The French Open third round begins on Friday with top seed Aryna Sabalenka, Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen and four-times winner Iga Swiatek in action while defending champion Carlos Alcaraz continues his quest for a fifth Grand Slam crown.

Two former Grand Slam champions clash when the big-serving Rybakina takes on the big-hitting Ostapenko, who will look to improve a head-to-head

record that has not gone in her favour.

Former Wimbledon champion Rybakina has a 3-2 record against 2017 French Open champion Ostapenko, beating her in their last three matches.

Rybakina arrived at Roland Garros after winning the Strasbourg Open, looking back to her best in time for the major.

But Ostapenko has shown good form on clay this season too, beating Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka to win the Stuttgart Open last month.

"Dangerous opponent. She hits the ball really hard, she can be very aggressive. So I will definitely need to focus a lot on my serve, be focused, be solid, patient, take the chances when I get them," Rybakina said of her Latvian opponent.

"If I serve well, (if) I have a good placement, it's not easy to return no matter who's on the other side."

Dzumhur has never played Alcaraz on the ATP Tour but the pair did meet in a Challenger Tour final in 2020 where the Spaniard fought back from a set down to win the title on home turf in Barcelona.

While Alcaraz has seen his career trajectory climb steeply since, Dzumhur has had his ups and downs and sits 69th in the rankings.

The Bosnian suffered a fall during his victory over Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard in the previous round.

"Regarding the knee, I asked the physio if I just hit (it), if it was just a bruise," said the 33-year-old who needed treatment. "If I cannot make it worse."

Alcaraz also stumbled in his second-round match when he dropped a set but the Spaniard is not too worried.

Pakistan to face Iraq, Cambodia, Oman in AFC U23 qualifiers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The AFC U23 Asian Cup Qualifiers are set to commence from September with Pakistan placed in Group G alongside Iraq, Cambodia, and Oman.

Hosted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the group-stage fixtures will unfold

between September 3 and 9, said a press release.

Pakistan's campaign begins on September 3 against Iraqi side, followed by a second group match against hosts Cambodia on September 6.

The team will wrap up

its group fixtures against Oman on September 9. All matches will be played at a central venue in Phnom Penh, with kick-off times yet to be confirmed.

As per the tournament structure, each team in Group G will play three matches in a single round-

robin format.

The top team from each group, along with the best second-placed sides across all groups, will advance to the final round of the AFC U23 Asian Cup - a gateway to the 2026 AFC U23 Championship.

Thunder thrash Wolves in Game 5, storm into NBA Finals

NEW YORK (Reuters): Even before the basket went in, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander spread his arms wide to his side in celebration.

Cason Wallace left his right arm high in the air, just waiting for the ball to drop through the basket.

Soon enough, inevitably, it did.

Wallace's corner 3-pointer at the buzzer was the exclamation point on a dominant first quarter for Gilgeous-Alexander and the Oklahoma City Thunder, who rode the hot start to a 124-94 home win that ended the Western Conference finals in Game 5 on Wednesday.

Gilgeous-Alexander finished with 34 points, eight assists and seven rebounds as the Thunder closed out the best-of-seven series.

"I didn't want to go back to Minnesota travel-wise and I wanted the fans to enjoy the moment with us," Gilgeous-Alexander said.

The Thunder are headed to the NBA Finals for the first time since 2012 and the fifth time in franchise history. The first three appearances came when the club was based in Seattle.

Oklahoma City will host Game 1 of the Finals against either the Indiana Pacers or the New York Knicks on June 5.

"Happy for this moment, but this isn't our goal," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "This isn't the end of our road."

The Wednesday outcome was evident early, as the Thunder buried the Timberwolves under the weight of a stifling defense

and playmaking by Gilgeous-Alexander, Jalen Williams and Chet Holmgren.

Oklahoma City put the game away quickly, leading by 17 after the first quarter and 33 at halftime.

The Timberwolves saw their season end in the Western Conference finals for the second consecutive year.

"I'm going to work my butt off this summer," Timberwolves star Anthony Edwards said. "Nobody's going to work harder than me this summer, I'll tell you that much."

Gilgeous-Alexander dished out five of his assists in the opening quarter as he again showed why he was selected the NBA's Most Valuable Player.

After the Timberwolves

scored the game's first hoop, Gilgeous-Alexander had a hand in all five Oklahoma City baskets during an 11-0 run that started the Thunder's march toward the blowout.

In that stretch, Gilgeous-Alexander had four assists - three on Holmgren buckets -- and drained a finger roll to start the separation.

On Monday, the Timberwolves started Game 4 red hot from the field but ultimately fell 128-126.

On Wednesday, Minnesota struggled on offense from the start, going just 1-for-11 from the field over the first five minutes.

Gilgeous-Alexander outscored Minnesota in the first quarter 12-9 and scored or assisted on 24 of the Thunder's 26 first-quarter points.

Palmer inspires Chelsea to 4-1 win over Betis in Conference League final

WROCLAW (Reuters): Chelsea sparked into life in the second half as they came from behind to claim the Conference League trophy with a 4-1 victory over Real Betis on Wednesday, their revival inspired by the creativity of Cole Palmer at the Wroclaw Stadium.

Goals from Enzo Fernandez and Nicolas Jackson - both set up by the excellent Palmer - plus late strikes from Jadon Sancho and Moises Caicedo secured the silverware after Betis went in 1-0 up at halftime thanks to an early Abde Ezzalzouli strike.

The 23-year-old Palmer's two assists in five minutes during the second half turned the match around for Premier League club Chelsea and his efforts saw him named Player of the Match.

The victory means Chelsea are the first team to have won all three European competitions, having lifted the Champions League twice along with two Europa League trophies in their history. They have also won the now defunct Cup Winners' Cup.

"I am very happy. I was a little bit frustrated in the first half because I think we approached

the game in the wrong way," Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca told TNT Sport.

"In the second half we played much better."

The result had no bearing on European qualification for next season, with Chelsea having secured a Champions League spot and Real Betis a Europa League place via their domestic leagues.

Even before the match started, Betis fans set off green flares, their vibrant glow embodying the fervour and historic pride of the club's debut appearance in a European final.

However, Betis appeared nervous in the opening minutes before they went ahead when Isco found the unmarked Ezzalzouli at the edge of the box in the ninth minute, giving him plenty of time to break the deadlock with a powerful low shot.

Betis nearly doubled their advantage minutes later when Marc Bartra's long-range effort forced Chelsea goalkeeper Filip Jorgensen to tip the ball over the bar.

Johnny Cardoso then received a perfectly weighted pass that put him in an ideal position to score another goal for Betis, but a moment of hes-

itation allowed Chelsea defender Benoit Badiashile to block his attempt.

In the first half, only one team had been in the ascendancy as Betis pushed forward and Chelsea were outplayed.

However, it was a different story in the second period as Chelsea seized control, dominating midfield and orchestrating a series of attacks that left Betis scrambling.

The pressure bore fruit in the 65th minute when Fernandez slipped between two defenders to head home a pinpoint Palmer cross for the equaliser and ignite a roar from the Chelsea fans.

Five minutes later, the match had completely turned around when Palmer cleverly turned his marker near the byline and again delivered a precise cross that enabled Jackson to bundle the ball into the net off his chest and put Chelsea ahead.

Sancho effectively ended the contest in the 83rd minute by firing into the far corner and Caicedo put the icing on the cake with the fourth goal in stoppage time to delight the fans and secure the London club's seventh major European trophy.





In brief

Tarar felicitates office bearers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday extended felicitations to the newly elected office bearers of the Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA). The minister, in a statement, congratulated Faisal Sahi on being elected as President, Arif Khan as General Secretary, and Hasnain Liaquat as Finance Secretary. He also felicitated Shafiq Raja for his election as Senior Vice President, Naveed Khokhar as Vice President, and Ambreen Ali as Vice President for Women. Tarar emphasized the crucial role being played by sports journalism in promoting positive activities within society and guiding youth. He described RISJA as an active and dynamic platform, further stating that the association effectively highlights issues within the sports world while upholding journalistic values. Attaullah Tarar expressed his best wishes for the newly elected officials, hoping that the new leadership will bring about further improvement and progress in the field of journalism.

Section 144 imposed

RAWALPINDI (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Ehsan Tariq on Thursday said that Section 144 had been imposed on pigeon racing, kite flying, and drones in areas up to five kilometres around Islamabad Airport, Qasim Air Base, and Noor Khan Air Base for one month. Presiding over a meeting to review the cleanliness and security arrangements ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, he directed the officials to make zero-waste arrangements in the areas of Khurram Colony, Sadiqabad, Karal Chowk, Dhok Hafiz, Chah Sultan and various other areas around the airports. The ADCG directed the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) to ensure the disposal of waste and offal of sacrificial animals from dumping sites. Apart from this, all the areas around Islamabad International Airport, Mumtaz City and adjacent zones under the limits of Rawalpindi should also be cleaned in advance so that birds cannot gather on filth sites and harm the flights. Similarly, instructions had also been issued for a pigeon racing and kite flying ban around Qasim Air Base.

COVID cases resurfaced

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned infectious diseases expert Dr. Faisal Mehmood on Thursday warned that COVID-19 is once again spreading across the country. While talking to a private news channel, he said that the virus is now generally seen as a mild viral infection, and he advised the public to remain cautious and follow basic preventive measures to stay safe. He said that patients arriving at hospitals generally have mild symptoms such as fever, cough, cold, body aches, and, in some cases, difficulty breathing. Dr. Faisal urged the public to take precautionary measures, including wearing masks in crowded places and washing hands thoroughly with soap. He advised that anyone experiencing a worsening fever or cough should get tested immediately. Dow Hospital is receiving 8 to 10 patients daily with symptoms of COVID-19, while more than 50 patients suffering from respiratory illnesses are reporting to the emergency rooms at Jinnah and Civil Hospitals, he added.

Wafaqi Mohtasib opens webinar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ombudsman and Ombudsman-like institutions are playing a critical role in upholding the rule of law, redressing grievances, thus fostering good governance. This was stated by the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman), Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, while addressing a webinar on “Ombudsmanship: Complying with the International Standards”, at the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, here today.

Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, who is also the current President of the 47-member strong Asian Ombudsman Association, said that it is a matter of great satisfaction that the institution of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) has emerged as a reliable forum to

address public grievances expeditiously and without any financial costs. He informed that the Wafaqi Mohtasib aligns its operations with the universally acclaimed benchmarks which are commonly known as the Paris Principles, the Venice Principles and the latest UN General Assembly Resolution 79/177. The provisions of these international instruments provide comprehensive guidelines for efficient discharge of the mandate of ombudsman institutions, he maintained. Mr. Qureshi, further added that compliance with international standards lends greater credibility and legitimacy to the functioning of the ombudsman institutions all over the world.

The Principal and Dean of NUST Law School, Mr.

Justice (Retd.) M. Nawaz Wahla in his keynote address, highlighted the significance of the international standards which characterized the functioning of the ombudsman and mediator institutions. He said that the UN General Assembly, through multiple resolutions has recognized the importance of ombudsman and mediator institutions in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in addition to good governance and respect for the rule of law.

The Webinar was attended by a large number of member institutions of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA), the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman (FPO), members of academia and civil society.

Tobacco taxation: Speakers propose substantial increases

ISLAMABAD (APP): Public health experts, parliamentarians, and civil society leaders have called for urgent and substantial increases in tobacco taxation.

Addressing a high-level policy dialogue on tobacco control, they also urged for stricter enforcement of tobacco control laws to address the alarming rise in nicotine consumption, especially among Pakistan's youth.

MNA Saher Kamran, highlighted the critical role of educational institutions in safeguarding youth. She informed that she has moved many bills in the Senate as well as National Assembly during the past 15 years.

Presenting compelling data, Asif Iqbal, Managing Director of the Social Policy and Development

Centre, underscored that the freeze on FED since February 2023, coupled with relatively low inflation, has made cigarettes increasingly affordable.

He warned that if corrective tax measures are not implemented in the upcoming fiscal year, over 490,000 young people are likely to initiate smoking.

“A significant tax hike would not only curb tobacco consumption but also generate much-needed revenue for public health,” Iqbal stressed.

Zaheer Qureshi, Director of FBR Track and Trace System, provided insights into FBR's efforts to combat illicit trade through digital monitoring. He noted that products like tobacco, sugar, and cement are now

tracked electronically across the supply chain to enhance transparency and revenue collection.

Dr. Arsalan Haider, Director of the Tobacco Control Cell at the Ministry of National Health Services, shared the mandate of TCC terming it as a comprehensive, self-guiding framework aimed at supporting Pakistan's commitments under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

From the provincial legislature, Punjab MPA Tahira Mushtaq spoke about her successful resolution in the Punjab Assembly, advocating for a provincial tobacco levy and legal measures to regulate emerging products like vapes and e-cigarettes.

NUML hosts successful Open House & Job Fair



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Faculty of Engineering and Computing at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) successfully organized its Open House and Job Fair-Spring 2025, offering a dynamic platform for final-year students to showcase their innovative Final Year Projects and engage with leading industry professionals.

The event featured an impressive array of projects by students from the departments of Computer Science, Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and

Mathematics. Exhibits spanned a wide range of cutting-edge domains, including the Internet of Things (IoT), Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Mobile Application Development, Web Programming, as well as Pure, Applied, and Computational Mathematics.

The innovation, technical depth, and problem-solving approach displayed by the students received widespread acclaim from visiting industry representatives. The Open House not only highlighted the academic excellence of NUML's engineering and

computing disciplines but also strengthened industry-academia linkages.

The Job Fair component of the event witnessed robust participation from various industry partners. Representatives from leading tech firms conducted on-spot interviews, resulting in multiple job offers and internship opportunities for NUML graduates.

The event concluded on a high note, reinforcing NUML's commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and meaningful industry engagement for the professional success of its students.



ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi addressing a webinar on “Ombudsmanship: Complying with the International Standards” at Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat.

Polio eradication campaign continued

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) has said that the national polio eradication campaign continued on Thursday with full swing on its fourth day.

During the first three days of the campaign, 81% of children across the country have been vaccinated, according to the NEOC.

In Punjab, 85% of targeted children have received the vaccine, while in Sindh, the coverage stands at 68%, the NEOC reported.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has achieved 86% coverage, Balochistan 74%, and Islamabad 63%, according to NEOC statistics.

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 93% of children have been vaccinated, while in Gilgit-Baltistan, the figure is 91%, the NEOC added.

To prevent cross-border transmission of the poliovirus, synchronized campaigns are underway in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, the NEOC said.

The NEOC appealed the parents to open their doors to vaccination teams. “The NEOC strongly encourages parents to ensure their children receive polio drops in every campaign.”

Vaccinating children under the age of five is a national and moral responsibility for every citizen, the NEOC emphasized.

The NEOC warned that the poliovirus remains a serious threat in our environment.

World Digestive Health Day: Medical expert advise to consume balanced diet

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the occasion of World Digestive Health Day, observed on May 29, medical experts emphasized the importance of a balanced and nutritious diet to promote digestive health and prevent related complications.

Speaking at a press conference held at the National Press Club, Dr. Sultan Zeb, Dr. Sarwar Malik, and Dr. Tayyab Saeed highlighted key causes of digestive issues, including the consumption of unhealthy, high-fat foods, inadequate water intake, and irregular lifestyles.

They further noted that mental stress, smoking, and alcohol consumption significantly contribute to worsening digestive conditions.

The experts revealed that over 40% of individuals suffer from acidity-related problems despite taking medication.

They urged the public to adopt lifestyle changes such as avoiding late-night meals, eating in moderation, staying physically active and not remaining sedentary for extended periods.

They also pointed out that one in every three people worldwide experiences digestive problems, such as heartburn, acidity, indigestion, and constipation, often due to poor dietary and lifestyle habits. Special emphasis was placed on ensuring children receive nutritious diets to prevent future health issues.

DIG orders crackdown on crime

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Islamabad Police, Muhammad Jawad Tariq, on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review security arrangements and crime prevention strategies in the federal capital ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

An official told APP that the meeting was attended by SSP Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan, Zonal SPs, and SDPOs, who briefed the DIG on the current law and order situation and the overall security plan for Eid.

DIG Tariq said that special arrangements must be made for Chand Raat and Eid days, with a strong emphasis on marketplace

security and public safety. “A comprehensive crackdown will be launched against criminal elements, while foot, vehicle, and motorcycle patrolling must be intensified across all areas of the city,” he said.

DIG Tariq said strict checking will be ensured at all entry and exit points of the capital, and special attention will be given to the security of important buildings and places of worship.

DIG said that all patrolling units—including Dolphin Force, Ababeel, and Emergency Response Units—must enhance their effectiveness in every sector of Islamabad. “No one will be allowed to display

weapons publicly, and strict legal action will be taken against violators,” he added.

DIG Tariq said that officers must strengthen mutual coordination and ensure timely information sharing for operational efficiency. “The protection of citizens’ lives and property, and provision of every possible facility to them, is our top priority,” he said.

Tariq said a proper check and balance should be maintained over all field personnel and encouraged officers to appreciate and support their subordinates’ efforts. He also instructed that steps be taken for the welfare of the police force during the Eid holidays.

PNCA hosts striking solo exhibition

ISLAMABAD (APP): A striking solo exhibition titled “Intention vs Convention: Fluid Presence” by renowned German artist Dagmar Rauwald inaugurated at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Thursday.

Running from May 29 to June 03, the exhibition marks a vibrant celebration of cultural exchange between Pakistan and Germany.

The opening ceremony was graced by Pakistan's Ambassador to Germany, Shahid Kamal who high-

lighted the importance of cultural diplomacy and shared artistic values in strengthening bilateral relations.

With a distinguished diplomatic career across France, the United States, Sweden, and Germany, Ambassador Kamal's presence underscored Pakistan's commitment to fostering cross-cultural understanding.

The event also featured the support of PNCA Director General Mohammad Ayoub Jamali and curator Mariam Ahmed, who played pivotal roles in bringing the exhibition to life.

Central to the exhibition's curatorial vision was Pakistani visual artist and educator Farrah Mehmood, whose efforts elevated the artistic dialogue and laid a foundation for future creative collaborations between the two nations.

Dagmar Rauwald, a Hamburg-based artist recognized for her conceptual and emotionally expressive work, presented a compelling collection of paintings rendered on transparent film.

Her bold gestures and layered techniques explore the tensions between opacity and light, permanence and transience. Inspired by media imagery, socio-political themes, and the lyrical forms of Urdu calligraphy, Rauwald's art delves deep into notions of hybridity, identity, and gender.

Her innovative use of transparent foils offers viewers a unique interpe-

riative experience—what she terms a “fluid presence”—bridging Eastern and Western aesthetics in a dialogue both intimate and global. Rauwald's work has earned her critical acclaim both nationally and internationally for its thought-provoking themes and trans-cultural resonance.

A congratulatory message from Dr. Carsten Brosda, Senator for Culture and Media of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, further reinforced the significance of the event. Dr. Brosda praised the initiative as a beacon of artistic diplomacy and called for sustained exchanges between Hamburg and Islamabad in the field of arts and culture.

The exhibition drew a wide and appreciative audience from the arts, diplomatic corps, media, and development sectors. Attendees praised the show for its depth, originality, and universal message that art transcends language and borders.

As part of the exhibition's public engagement, a painting workshop led by Ms. Rauwald is scheduled for May 30 at 11:00 AM. Interested participants can register via email at pncavad.nag@gmail.com.

With its powerful message and collaborative spirit, “Intention vs Convention: Fluid Presence” not only enriches the Pakistani art scene but also sets a precedent for future Pakistan-Germany cultural partnerships.

DG Met Office forecast normal to above-normal rainfall in central, southern regions for monsoon season

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General of the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Mahr Sahibzad Khan Thursday indicated possibility of normal to slightly above-normal rainfall in central and southern regions in the upcoming monsoon season while northern areas are expected to receive comparatively less precipitation.

During a media briefing about the upcoming monsoon season, Sahibzad Khan stated that central to southern parts of the country are likely to witness normal to slightly above-normal rainfall, with the highest deviations expected in northeastern Punjab and Kashmir.

In contrast, the northern regions, including northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit-Baltistan, may receive normal to slightly below-normal rainfall during the forecast period.

He added that the monthly and seasonal outlook has been developed using the output of eight global seasonal prediction models that offer optimal forecasting accuracy.

In terms of temperature, Mahr Sahibzad Khan informed that mean temperatures are expected to remain above normal across the country.

The maximum temperature anomalies are projected over Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and adjoining

areas of KP.

He explained that mean temperature refers to the average of maximum and minimum temperatures over a given period, and rising mean temperatures indicate a general warming trend, which may have wide-ranging impacts on agriculture, water availability, and human health.

The Director General warned of the possibility of extreme hydro-meteorological events that could lead to riverine floods in major rivers.

He highlighted that strong winds, dust storms, and hailstorms may occur due to sharp temperature gradients.

Flash or urban flooding

is anticipated in hill torrent zones and plains of Sindh, Punjab, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and KP during the first half of the monsoon season.

Elevated temperatures in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Kashmir could accelerate snowmelt, thereby increasing river water levels.

He also pointed out that the above-normal temperatures in upper KP and Gilgit-Baltistan may contribute to an increased risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in those mountainous regions.

On a positive note, the anticipated rainfall is likely to ensure sufficient water availability for irrigation

and power generation.

Due to the expected normal to slightly above-normal rainfall in North Punjab, AJK, and KP, there is a possibility of increased localized flooding, including both urban and flash flooding.

However, this rainfall will also aid in the replenishment of water reservoirs and underground water resources.

About the current water levels in major dams across the country, Sahibzad Khan shared updated figures indicating relatively stable conditions ahead of the high-demand summer season.

Tarbela Dam currently stands at 1477 feet, which is 73 feet below its maxi-

mum conservation level of 1550 feet, but 75 feet above its dead level of 1402 feet. Mangla Dam is at 1160 feet, 82 feet below its maximum level of 1242 feet, and 110 feet above the dead level of 1050 feet. Rawal Dam reports a level of 1739 feet, just 13 feet below its maximum conservation level of 1752 feet, and 31 feet above the dead level of 1708 feet. Simly Dam shows a healthy water level of 2255 feet, 60 feet below the maximum level of 2315 feet, and 22 feet above its dead level of 2233 feet.

Meanwhile, Khanpur Dam stands at 1926 feet, which is 56 feet below the maximum conservation level of 1982 feet, and 16 feet

above the dead level of 1910 feet. These figures, the DG noted, reflect a positive outlook as most dams are well above their dead levels.

To ensure public safety and preparedness, the PMD has activated Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) at both provincial and district levels.

Rescue and relief teams are being deployed in vulnerable areas for the monsoon period. Coordination with local administrations is underway for evacuation planning and early warning dissemination. Awareness campaigns have also been launched in at-risk communities to enhance public readiness.

1,000 personnel graduate

KABUL (BNA): Ministry of National Defense announced the graduation of 1,000 personnel from its Special Forces unit. The graduates, representing the 1st Joint Special Forces Battalion, Mobile Armored Battalion, and 4th Joint Battalion, completed an intensive one-month advanced military training course. Mawlawi Mumtaz Ahmad Haqqani Deputy of Special Forces, along with other officials, addressed the graduates, emphasizing the importance of their training.

Ghazni families reconciled

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Two rival families have reconciled in southern Ghazni province, ending their four-year-old enmity after mediation by tribal elders and religious scholars. District Chief Maulvi Noorullah Atal told Pajhwok Afghan News the four-year-old feud had claimed one life in Saman Kala area of Muqor district. This hostility came to an end after mediation by government officials, tribal elders and religious scholars.

Thousands of livestock die of anthrax-like disease in Kunar

ASADABAD (Pajhwok): A deadly disease resembling anthrax has infected approximately 350,000 animals in Kunar province over the past two months, killing nearly 14,000 of them, officials say.

Dr. Gul Rahman Hananzi, head of veterinary health and services at the provincial Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, told Pajhwok Afghan News that about 60 percent of ruminant animals — including sheep, goats, cows and buffaloes — had contracted the high-

ly contagious illness.

“In the past two months, this fatal disease has spread across various parts of Kunar, leading to the deaths of 13,884 animals, mostly calves, sheep, and goats,” he said.

Hananzi explained that the disease, locally known as Tabaq, was a severe and infectious condition in livestock. It causes high fever, ulcers in the mouth and on the feet, loss of appetite, and ultimately death.

He added that the issue had been reported to the Ministry of Agriculture and

the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), expressing hope that vaccines would be delivered soon.

Meanwhile, livestock owners are calling on the government to provide emergency vaccinations to prevent further losses.

Lal Mohammad, a resident of Asadabad, said: “Three of my animals were infected with Tabaq. Two cows recovered, but one died. I urge the Agriculture Department to provide vaccines on time to protect our livestock.”

Obaidullah, from Wata-

pur district, said three of his goats died due to the disease. He appealed for urgent support, stressing the seriousness of the situation.

“We are poor people. We rely on livestock products for our daily needs. Now our animals are being wiped out. The government and aid organisations must help us,” he said.

According to official figures from the Agriculture Department, there are around 600,000 ruminant animals in Kunar, with roughly 350,000 currently infected with the disease.

Taliban flog 23 people in 4 provinces

KABUL (Amu TV): As the Taliban intensify their use of corporal punishment, 23 people, including one woman, were publicly flogged in Kunduz, Kunar, Takhar and Kabul provinces over the past two days.

According to Taliban statements, 16 of the individuals were lashed in Kunar, 3 in Kabul, 2 in Kunduz and 2 people were flogged in Takhar.

Taliban-run supreme court said in separate statements that the individuals were accused of a range of offenses, including the sale of alcohol and narcotic tablets, extramarital and same-sex relations, theft, drug use, “disrespect,” “immoral behavior” and “illicit relations.” Each was sentenced to between 10 and 39 lashes, and prison terms ranging from six months to three years.

The floggings were carried out in public following approvals from Taliban-run courts, the statements said, and were conducted in front of local residents as part of the group’s strict enforcement of its interpretation of Islamic law.

According to reporting by Amu TV, the latest round of floggings brings the total to at least 70 people — including three women — subjected to public lashings across nine provinces in the past week. That represents a more than 130 percent increase compared with the same period last month.

Provinces where the floggings took place include Kabul, Laghman, Paktia, Ghazni, Sar-e Pul, Kunduz, Takhar, Kunar and Badakhshan. Punishments have ranged from 10 to nearly 40 lashes and include custodial sentences.

Since returning to power in August 2021, the Taliban have publicly flogged nearly 1,000 people, including at least 160 women, according to rights monitors. The practice appears to be increasingly normalized in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, despite repeated calls from the United Nations and human rights groups to end corporal punishment. These groups have called the lashings a violation of international law and a grave abuse of human rights. Yet the Taliban have shown no sign of retreating from the practice.

Taliban leader has publicly endorsed the implementation of hudood and qisas — retributive punishments under Islamic law — and has ordered their continued enforcement across the country.

Minister stresses support for farmers

KABUL (TOLONews): Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Sadr Azam Osmani emphasized support for landowners and farmers in the country during the “Farm Day Celebration” event.

At the event held at the Beni Hesar Agricultural Research Farm in Kabul, Osmani stated that the ministry is working to make Afghanistan self-sufficient in agriculture.

The deputy minister said: “Wars, natural disasters, climate change, and technical shortcomings have caused us problems in our production.”

Meanwhile, officials from the Agricultural Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture highlighted their achievements in various fields, including seed research and its distribution to farmers.



They stated that last year they conducted over a hundred agricultural experiments across different provinces.

Mohammad Rafi Bawari, head of applied and coordinated research at the Agricultural Research Institute, said: “Last year, we planned 109 experiments across all zones of the country, which were implemented.”

Safiullah Jawhar, dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Kabul University, another speaker at the event, welcomed such programs and emphasized the importance of organic agriculture in the country.

Previously, Deputy Minister Osmani said that supporting farmers would also increase the level of domestic cooking oil production.

Russian trader presents emerald investment plan in Panjsher



PARAKH (Pajhwok): A Russian trader has presented an investment plan for six emerald mines in Hes-e-Awal district of central

Panjsher province, an official said on Thursday.

In a statement, the local administration said Alig, a Russian gemstone trader,

presented his investment plan in a meeting with governor Al-Haj Hafez Mohammad Agha Hakim, Governor spokesman

Saifuddin Laton told Pajhwok Afghan News the plan has been approved by the local administration and the Russian businessman is set to invest in six emerald mines in the village of Khunj in the Hesa-e-Awal district.

The governor explained he supports any legitimate and legal investment and is ready to cooperate fully to provide the necessary conditions, the report added.

According to the reports, Alig, expressing satisfaction with the existing security in Panjshir, said he would make his investment using advanced equipment and in a standardized manner, and he will encourage other Russian companies to invest in the province.

Construction ban leaves Al-Biruni township residents in lurch

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Residents of the Al-Biruni township in southern Ghazni province of Afghanistan say they are not permitted to construct homes or carry out any construction work on their legally allotted land, leaving them in the lurch.

The Al-Biruni township was established around two decades ago to accommodate returnees and displaced families, with plots of land distributed among beneficiaries.

However, all construction activities in the area were suspended after the return of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

(IEA) to power.

Haji Faheem, a representative of the township’s residents, told Pajhwok Afghan News that numerous homes had been built in the area over the past 20 years.

“Now, the Islamic Emirate is not allowing anyone to construct new houses, which has caused significant problems for landowners and families hoping to settle,” he said.

Another tribal elder, Haji Hayat, said approximately 8,000 residential plots had been distributed under the scheme.

“Many people have invested millions of afgha-

nis in building homes, markets and other infrastructure. If the construction ban continues, residents and landowners will suffer major financial losses,” he warned.

Some residents also say the ban has negatively impacted the local economy, particularly the construction materials market, and has rendered many labourers jobless.

In response, local officials say the suspension of construction is aimed at preventing illegal land occupation.

Dawar Mohammad Kakar, resettlement officer at the Ghazni Department

of Refugee and Repatriation, said some plots, green areas, parks, and land allocated for schools, mosques, orphanages and other public facilities had been seized by land grabbers.

“No construction work will be allowed until a full investigation is completed,” he said, adding that a provincial commission had been formed to address the issue within the next two to three months.

Fazal Ahmad Madani, sectoral officer at Ghazni Municipality, noted that the township has now been incorporated into one of the city’s districts.

ARCS delegation travels to Turkey

KABUL (BNA): Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) delegation, led by Mawlawi Abdul Latif Sabat, the Deputy Operational Secretary General, traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, to assess the support program for vulnerable and needy individuals through social health services, public awareness, emergency humanitarian aid, and economic empowerment.

The ARCS announced today, Thursday that the visit was made at the invitation of the UK’s

Department for Foreign Relations, Common Interests, and Development Affairs. The purpose of the trip is to evaluate the current situation, achievements, and challenges of the program and to discuss and make necessary decisions regarding an effective plan for the coming years.

Through its support program for vulnerable and needy individuals, the Afghan Red Crescent Society distributes food items, tents, blankets, and medical supplies to families

in need. Additionally, it provides cash assistance to individuals with professional and technical skills to help them create income-generating opportunities.

The organization also plays an important role in social participation, public awareness, and strengthening leadership capacities among the youth. The Afghan Red Crescent Society is committed to taking effective steps through such programs to improve the lives of fellow citizens in the country.

90% work on Qush Tepa Canal completed

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): The National Development Company (NDC) says 90 percent of excavation and nearly 80 percent of the dam’s construction work as part of the second phase of the Qush Tepa Canal has been completed, with the remaining set to be finalized soon.

Naqibullah Arghandiwal, NDC spokesperson, told reporters in Andkhoy district of Faryab province that work on the mega project was progressing rapidly across various sections, and

efforts were underway to complete the remaining parts as soon as possible.

He said 79.5 percent of the dam’s construction had been completed, with the remaining work being carried out by skilled Afghan engineers in line with national and international standards.

According to Arghandiwal, work on 11 bridges along the canal is also underway, and the construction of additional bridges will commence shortly. These will help

reconnect areas that were disconnected by the canal’s development.

Meanwhile, Zabihullah Miri, the site manager for the project, said domestic materials were being used in the construction and all engineers and workers involved were Afghan nationals.

The 280 kilometres long, 100 metres wide and five metres deep canal, fed by Amu River, will irrigate 500,000 hectares of land in northern Balkh, Jawzjan and Faryab provinces.

From chaos to model school: Principal Kohistani retires

KABUL (Pajhwok): After 24 years of continuous and effective leadership, Asadullah Kohistani succeeded in transforming Ghulam Haidar Khan High School in Kabul—once known for chaos and disorder—into a model and well-organized educational institution.

He says he gained public trust and strengthened the learning process sustainably at the school by implementing the slogan, “Education with the people, and the people with education.”

Who is Asadullah Kohistani?

Asadullah Kohistani was born in 1341 (1962) in the Hesa Duwum district of Kapisa province.

He completed his school at Mahmood Raqi High School and later graduated from Kabul University of Education in the field of Dari language and literature. In his youth, he served in the military for four and a half years and was appointed as a teacher in 1364 (1985) at Saboor Shaheed High School—now known as Ghulam Haidar Khan High School.

After 10 years of teaching, he gradually assumed administrative roles including Administrative Deputy, Academic Deputy, and eventually Principal of the school. Of his 36 years of service in Afghanistan’s education sector, he served 24 years as the principal of Ghulam Haidar Khan High School.

He also served as principal for 10 months at Naderia High School and for five months at Abdul

Ahmad Javid High School. On 23 Saur 1404 (May 12, 2025), he officially retired as per the directive of the Ministry of Education.

In an interview with Sohrab Sarwari, a journalist for Pajhwok Afghan News, Kohistani said that his schoolteachers were kind and responsible individuals who believed that education is the backbone of a country.

He says those teachers, along with his father, were his main inspirations to pursue the noble path of teaching—a path to which he dedicated 36 years of his life. He describes teaching not as a job but as a “deep passion and sincere commitment.”

Managing Kabul’s most challenging schools

At one point, the name of Ghulam Haidar Khan High School was synonymous with disorder, overcrowding, and chaos. The school lacked a boundary wall, with people frequently passing through the school grounds to reach Maryam Bazaar. It was overpopulated, had insufficient educational resources, and frequent physical altercations among students made it one of the most challenging schools in the capital.

Throughout Kohistani’s life, the name “Ghulam Haidar Khan School” recurs—what he calls “both a battlefield of conflict and a bastion of love for education.”

Though managing the school was a challenge many avoided, Kohistani stood firm with patience and perseverance for over

24 years, ensuring the school’s foundation remained strong.

With a bittersweet smile, he said: “Managing Ghulam Haidar Khan was hard—very hard. But I stayed. Instead of complaining, I built. Instead of fleeing, I stood my ground.”

He noted that in earlier days the school had no trees, fruit-bearing or otherwise, and its compound resembled a barren field with only a 24-classroom building amid many shortcomings.

He added that creating a suitable educational environment, solving classroom shortages, restoring discipline, and preparing students for responsible citizenship were major challenges he faced.

He believes that unity, cooperation, and a spirit of camaraderie among the school staff helped him overcome these obstacles. By practically applying the slogan “Education with the people, and the people with education,” he aimed to encourage families to cooperate with the educational system.

He strongly believes that parental involvement fosters student success and helps build a brighter future.

Kohistani said, “I tried to serve those children who come to school with hope, and the mothers and fathers who invest everything in educating their children. As someone responsible for education, I did my best with honesty and conscience to uphold the trust of these families.”

He also tried to keep politics out of the school and maintained that education should remain neutral, a stance he said was aligned with the broader policy of Afghanistan’s educational system.

He affirmed that throughout his tenure, he was treated with kindness by education authorities and never faced threats or insults. However, he leaves the judgment of his work to the public and insists that he always tried to serve the children of his country sincerely.

Kohistani told Pajhwok that every Afghan citizen has a duty to serve their country, especially when they benefit from its environment and resources.

He said: “As a citizen of this country, my passion has always been to serve. This country raised us; it is our mother. Serving it, particularly in education, brings honor and blessings.”

He added that his greatest joy was seeing positive results at the end of each school year when students succeeded in their university entrance exams or moved up academically with strong foundations.

Achievements

Among his many accomplishments at Ghulam Haidar Khan High School, Kohistani highlighted the establishment of a well-equipped library with 10,000 books, the planting of 18 varieties of fruit trees, the creation of a green and welcoming environment, a modern laboratory, and a mosque with a capacity of 400 worshippers.

Awards and honors

Asadullah Kohistani received multiple commendations and awards during his career.

He was awarded the Ghazi Mir Masjidi Khan Kohistani Medal by former President Hamid Karzai and the Ghazi Mir Bacha Khan Kohdamani Medal by former President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani. The previous Afghan government also recognized him as a Peace Ambassador for Education.

His students who reached great heights

Kohistani says his greatest pride lies not in certificates or titles, but in his students—many of whom now serve as ministers, deputy ministers, generals, parliamentarians, medical specialists, university professors, school teachers, and societal leaders.

With emotional pride, he stated: “They’ve never forgotten my ethical teachings, mentoring, and sincere affection. To this day, they maintain heartfelt connections with me.”

He believes these successes were not solely due to his individual efforts but were the result of collective teamwork, shared belief in education, and love for the homeland.

He added that seven former members of Afghanistan’s parliament and several ministers were once students at Ghulam Haidar Khan, and at least 31 of its graduates returned to become teachers at the same school.

He said: “Seeing students from Ghulam Haidar Khan reach high positions

encouraged me to keep working hard and never feel tired.”

Kohistani’s retirement: An end or a beginning?

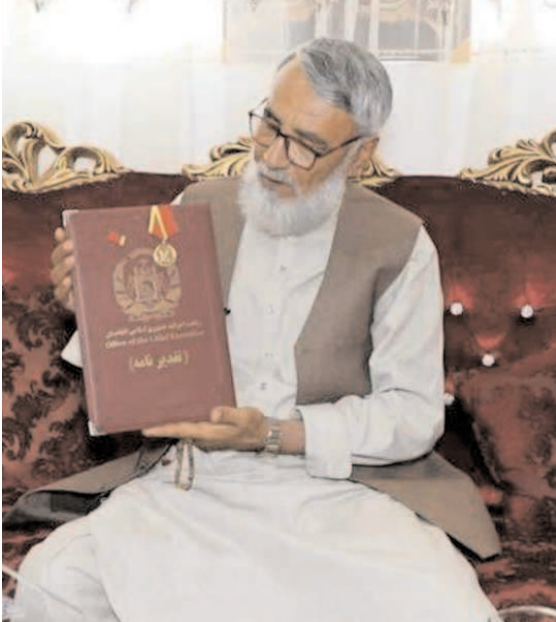
On a quiet spring day in the month of Saur, the final school bell marked more than just the end of a class—it signified the closure of a golden chapter in Asadullah Kohistani’s life. After dedicating 36 years to the education of Afghan youth, it was a heartfelt farewell.

Kohistani, who doesn’t see himself as separated from education, stated: “I said goodbye to the principal’s desk, not to the endless love for teaching; I left the office, not the mission; I stepped away from the official scene, but not from the hearts.”

He emphasized that his mission hasn’t ended and that he will always remain a servant to the people of Afghanistan. He called on fellow citizens to serve the country sincerely and with integrity.

Although retired, his heart still beats for education. When passing by the school gate, memories rush back—bells ringing, students’ quarrels, parents’ concerns—all still vivid in his mind.

He said: “On 23 Saur, I was proudly retired. I feel a chapter of my life full of love, commitment, sacrifice, and development ended with honor. But my heart remains alive in the classrooms, the school bells, and the hopeful eyes of my students. This decision didn’t lessen my passion for service; it prepared me to begin a new chapter



with a clear conscience.”

Kohistani publicly announced his retirement on his Facebook page, ending his message with: “Now, with a peaceful heart and clear conscience, I step away from the formal stage, but my emotional bond with education and the children of this land will never break.”

In another message to his students and the public, he advised: “Combine knowledge with ethics, remain loyal to humanity, pursue justice and fairness, and make unity and genuine solidarity your guiding principles.”

Students

Mohammad Siam Haleem, a distinguished graduate of Ghulam Haidar Khan High School, enrolled in the journalism faculty at Kabul University in 1396 (2017), while also

studying law and political science at a private university. He now teaches at a private university in Kabul.

He said that before joining this school, he studied at a private school in Taloqan, but after moving to Kabul and researching schools, he chose Ghulam Haidar Khan because of its reputation for discipline and strong management under Kohistani.

“The school had a very organized and positive environment, both academically and psychologically. Asadullah Kohistani personally oversaw everything,” he said.

He added that after graduation, he encouraged others to enroll their children in the school and hopes the new principal will continue Kohistani’s legacy and maintain the school’s standards.

44 killed in Israel attacks in Gaza

GAZA CITY (AFP): At least 44 people were killed in Israeli attacks across the Gaza Strip on Thursday, rescuers said, a day after a World Food Programme warehouse in the center of the territory was looted by desperate Palestinians.

After a more than two-month blockade, aid has finally begun to trickle back into Gaza, but the humanitarian situation remains dire after 18 months of devastating war. Food security experts say starvation is looming for one in five people. The Israeli military has also recently stepped up its offensive in the territory in what it says is a renewed push to destroy Hamas, whose October 7, 2023 attack triggered the war.

Gaza civil defense official Mohammad Al-Mughayyir told AFP “44 people have been killed in Israeli raids,” including 23 in a strike on home in Al-Bureij. “Two people were killed and several injured by Israeli forces’ gunfire this morning near the American aid center in the Morag axis, southern Gaza Strip,” he added.

The center, run by the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), is part of a new system for distributing aid that Israel says is meant to keep supplies out of the hands of Hamas, but which has drawn criticism from the United Nations and the European Union. “What is happening to us is degrading. The crowding is humiliating us,” said Gazan Sobhi Areef, who visited a GHF center on Thursday.

“We go there and risk our lives just to get a bag of flour to feed our children.” The Israeli military said it was looking into the reported deaths in Al-Bureij and near the aid center. Separately, it said in a statement that its forces had struck “dozens of terror targets throughout the Gaza Strip” over the past day.

In a telephone call Thursday with EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said Israel’s “systematic starvation tactics have crossed all moral and legal boundaries.” On Wednesday, thousands of desperate Palestinians stormed a World Food Programme (WFP) warehouse in central Gaza, with Israel and the UN trading blame over the deepening hunger crisis.

AFP footage showed crowds of Palestinians breaking into the WFP facility in Deir Al-Balah and taking bags of emergency food supplies as gunshots rang out. “Hordes of hungry people broke into

WFP’s Al-Ghafari warehouse in Deir Al-Balah, central Gaza, in search of food supplies that were pre-positioned for distribution,” the UN agency said in a statement. The issue of aid has come sharply into focus amid starvation fears and intense criticism of the GHF, which has bypassed the longstanding UN-led system in the territory.

Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon told the Security Council that aid was entering Gaza by truck — under limited authorization by Israel at the Kerem Shalom crossing — and accused the UN of “trying to block” GHF’s work through “threats, intimidation and retaliation against NGOs that choose to participate.” The UN has said it is doing its utmost to facilitate distribution of the limited assistance allowed by Israel’s authorities.

The world body said 47 people were wounded Tuesday when crowds of Palestinians rushed a GHF site. A Palestinian medical source reported at least one death. GHF, however, alleged in a statement that there had been “several inaccuracies” circulating about its operations, adding “there are many parties who wish to see GHF fail.”

But 60-year-old Abu Fawzi Faroukh, who visited a GHF center Thursday, said the situation there was “so chaotic.” “The young men are the ones who have received aid first, yesterday and today, because they are young and can carry loads, but the old people and women cannot enter due to the crowding,” he told AFP.

Negotiations on a ceasefire, meanwhile, have continued, with US envoy Steve Witkoff expressing optimism and saying he expected to propose a plan soon. But Gazans remained pessimistic.

“Six hundred days have passed and nothing has changed. Death continues, and Israeli bombing does not stop,” said Bassam Daloul, 40. The Gaza war was sparked by Hamas’s October 2023 attack on Israel that killed 1,218 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures. Out of 251 hostages seized during the attack, 57 remain in Gaza including 34 the Israeli military says are dead. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said Thursday that at least 3,986 people had been killed in the territory since Israel ended the ceasefire on March 18, taking the war’s overall toll to 54,249, mostly civilians.

SC judge questions interpretation of voting rights

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court’s (SC) Justice Musarrat Hilali on Thursday observed that the Supreme Court’s earlier decision on reserved seats declared the ‘right to vote’ as a fundamental right, while in reality, ‘vote is not a fundamental right.’

She observed this during the hearing of review petitions challenging the Supreme Court’s earlier decision to allocate reserved seats to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). An 11-member constitutional bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, conducted the proceedings.

Sunni Ittehad Council’s lawyer, Faisal Siddiqi, presented his arguments, stating, “For the first time, you are hearing a review of a 13-member bench’s verdict. That verdict has not even been fully read before this bench. How can you say the majority opinion should not be read during the review? I am surprised.”

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail questioned, “Who has stopped you from reading the verdict? Why are you complaining?” He added, “PTI remained a political party even after the intra-party case verdict. PTI itself had no confusion about its status, otherwise, it would not have issued party certificates.” Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar asked, “Can judges step beyond the constitutional scope to deliver judgments? Even if it’s for the sake of public interest or democracy, can a judge rewrite the Constitution?” Faisal Siddiqi argued that no rewriting of the Constitution had occurred. In response, Justice Musarrat Hilali noted, “It was rewritten — by extending the three-day limit to 15 days.”

Continuing his arguments, Siddiqi said, “Eleven judges recognized the independent candidates as being associated with PTI.” Justice Mandokhail pointed out, “As far as 39 candidates are concerned, even I and then Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa agreed with the eight-judge majority.” Justice Aminuddin Khan told Siddiqi, “You will get another hearing,” to which Siddiqi responded, “I will need at least two more hearings. I have not even begun my arguments. It seems like I am being questioned the most, even though I am not the only one who filed a review petition.” The Supreme Court subsequently adjourned the hearing on reserved seats until June 16, 2025.

President urged to focus on youth

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In a significant meeting a delegation of social and political figures from Punjab’s central districts engaged in discussions with President Asif Ali Zardari, highlighting regional issues and the potential of the youth.

The delegation, which included notable figures such as former Federal Minister Rana Farooq Saeed Khan and Tanveer Ashraf Kaira, emphasized the challenges faced by communities in Faisalabad, Gujrat, and Hafizabad, stated a press release issued by the PPP Media Cell on Thursday.

During the meeting, President Zardari underscored the importance of equal development across all regions, the reinforcement of national unity, and the fortification of democratic institutions as top priorities. He articulated that the younger generation is a vital asset and that their education, training, and active participation are crucial for building a prosperous Pakistan.

The delegation also presented proposals to leverage the capabilities of the youth for the country’s progression. President Zardari stressed the significance of unity among all federal units, fostering cooperative relations with the provinces, and prioritizing the welfare of citizens in alignment with national interests.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi presiding over 44th meeting of Law and Justice Commission.

Saif stresses critical link between health, population quality

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Addressing a workshop on Peshawar Media coalition on Reproductive Health, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, emphasized that reproductive health is not merely a health issue but a cornerstone of sustainable national development. He stated that the quality of a population, rather than its size alone, determines the trajectory of a nation’s progress.

Barrister Dr Saif stated that under Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has launched key maternal health initiatives, including nutrition support for expectant mothers, the ‘NourishMaa’ campaign to improve maternal nutrition, and extensive training programs for healthcare providers. The Integrated Health Project has unified various health services for better delivery. These efforts aim to reduce maternal mortality and improve healthcare access across the province.

He further revealed that during his tenure as Prime Minister, PTI founder Imran Khan launched major initiatives to improve maternal health in Pakistan. The Sehat Sahulat Program provided free health insurance covering maternity care for millions. He initiated the construction of mother and child hospitals, notably a 200-bed facility in Attock. Through the Ehsaas Programme, maternal nutrition was prioritized with supplements and awareness drives. Additionally, micro health insurance under Kamyab Pakistan offered free services to millions, including maternal care. These efforts significantly enhanced access to quality maternal health services



nationwide.

“Reproductive health and family planning are fundamental elements in shaping a productive and healthy society. A well-facilitated and health-conscious population is a prerequisite for national development,” Barrister Dr. Saif remarked.

He pointed out that the persistent gap between policy and its implementation is one of Pakistan’s critical challenges. While acknowledging the existence of policy frameworks at national level, Dr. Saif noted that real progress requires reducing the gap between policy formulation and its implementation.

“A developed nation is not one that merely drafts sound policies, but one that ensures their timely and equitable execution. We must shift from reactive to proactive governance if we are to truly address our social challenges,” he asserted.

Highlighting the cultural and social dimensions of reproductive health, Dr. Saif clarified that past efforts relied too heavily on top-down, externally driven approaches without adequately engaging local communities, religious scholars and relevant stakeholders. He stressed that sociocultural dynamics must be respected and integrated into public health strategies.

“There is a critical difference

between religion and religiosity,” he said. “The failure has often been in confronting religious apprehensions instead of constructively engaging religious scholars, community elders, and opinion leaders. Without this engagement, even the most well-funded programs will fail to reach hearts and minds.”

Barrister Dr. Saif also underscored the need for building “acceptable social awareness” around reproductive health. He stated that campaigns must be designed in ways that align with local customs, values, and religious sensitivities.

“Social awareness is not about imposing alien concepts, it’s about creating understanding that is contextually acceptable,” he said. “Programs must be shaped with respect for our social realities and moral frameworks. If we fail to recognize this, we risk backlash, resistance, and ultimately failure.”

Concluding his address, Barrister Saif urged the media to play its role as a responsible partner in development, using its platforms to raise awareness, counter misinformation, and advocate for evidence-based health initiatives. “The pen in your hands can shape the discourse, dispel myths, and push the state toward meaningful reform,” he said.

Syria-Israel peace possible: US envoy

DAMASCUS (Reuters): The newly-appointed United States Syria envoy said he believed peace between the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel was achievable as he made his first trip to Damascus on Thursday, praising the new government and saying it was ready for dialogue.

Thomas Barrack raised the American flag over the ambassador’s residence for the first time since the US embassy closed in 2012, underlining a rapid expansion of US ties with Damascus since President Donald Trump unexpectedly announced the lifting of sanctions and met Syrian leader Ahmed Al-Sharaa.

“Syria and Israel is a solvable problem. But it starts with a dialogue,” Barrack told a small group of journalists in Damascus. “I’d say we need to start with just a non-aggression agreement, talk about boundaries and borders,” he said. Barrack also said that Syria would no longer be deemed a state sponsor of terrorism by the United States, saying the issue was “gone with the Assad regime being finished” but that Congress had a six-month review period.

“America’s intent and the president’s vision is that

we have to give this young government a chance by not interfering, not demanding, by not giving conditions, by not imposing our culture on your culture,” Barrack said. Interim President Sharaa, a former Al-Qaeda commander, is rapidly reorienting a country that had turbulent ties with the West and close relations to Iran and Russia during more than five decades of rule by the Assad family.

Syria has long been a frontline state in the Arab-Israeli conflict, with Israel occupying the Syrian Golan Heights since a war in 1967. Israel seized more Syrian territory in the border zone following Bashar Assad’s ouster in December, citing concerns about the jihadist roots of Syria’s new rulers.

Reuters reported on Tuesday that Israeli and Syrian officials were in direct contact, having held face-to-face meetings aimed at calming tensions and preventing conflict in the border region. Trump urged Sharaa to normalize relations with Israel when they met in Riyadh earlier this month.

Barrack, who is also US ambassador to Turkiye, was named as Syria’s US envoy

on May 23. He noted Syria had been under US sanctions since 1979. Some of the toughest were implemented in 2020 under the so-called Caesar act, which Barrack said must be repealed by Congress within a 180-day window.

“I promise you the one person who has less patience with these sanctions than all of you is President Trump,” he said. The US closed its embassy in Damascus in February 2012, nearly a year after protests against Assad devolved into a violent conflict that went on to ravage Syria for more than a decade.

Then-ambassador Robert Ford was pulled out of Syria shortly before the embassy closed. Subsequent US envoys for Syria operated from abroad and did not visit Damascus. During Syria’s 14-year war, hundreds of thousands of people were killed, millions were displaced both internally and outside the country and the West ratcheted up pressure against Assad by cutting ties and imposing tough sanctions, but he clung onto power with help from Iran and Russia. Sharaa led Al-Qaeda’s official wing in Syria for years until severing ties with the global jihadist network in 2016.

Judge extends order blocking Trump ban on foreign students at Harvard

BOSTON: A federal judge on Thursday extended an order blocking the Trump administration’s attempt to bar Harvard University from enrolling foreign students. US District Judge Allison Burroughs extended the block she imposed last week with a temporary restraining order, which allows the Ivy League school to continue enrolling international students as a lawsuit proceeds.

Harvard sued the Department of Homeland Security on Friday after Secretary Kristi Noem revoked its ability to host foreign students at its campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts. “Harvard will continue to take steps to protect the rights of our international students and scholars, members of our community who are vital to the University’s academic mission and community — and whose presence here benefits our country immeasurably,” a university spokesman said in a statement.

On Wednesday, the Trump administration introduced a new effort to revoke Harvard’s certification to

enroll foreign students. In a letter sent by the acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement director, Todd Lyons, the government gave Harvard 30 days to respond to the alleged grounds for withdrawal, which include accusations that Harvard coordinated with foreign entities and failed to respond sufficiently to antisemitism on campus.

The developments unfolded in a courtroom not far from the Harvard campus, where speakers at Thursday’s commencement ceremony stressed the importance of maintaining a diverse and international student body. The dispute over international enrollment at Harvard is the latest escalation in a battle between the White House and the nation’s oldest and wealthiest college. In April, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem sent a letter to the school, demanding a range of records related to foreign students, including discipline records and anything related to “dangerous or violent activity.” Noem said it was in response to accusations of antisemitism on

Harvard’s campus.

Harvard says it complied. But on May 22, Noem sent a letter saying the school’s response fell short. She said Harvard was being pulled from the federal program that allows colleges to sponsor international students to get US visas. It took effect immediately and prevented Harvard from hosting foreign students in the upcoming school year. In its lawsuit, Harvard argued the government failed to follow administrative procedures and regulations for removing schools from eligibility to host international students, which include giving schools the opportunity to appeal and a 30-day window to respond.

Noem’s earlier letter to Harvard notified the school that its eligibility was revoked immediately. It did not cite any regulations or statutes that Harvard allegedly violated. The Wednesday letter accuses Harvard of violating regulations around reporting requirements and violating an executive order regarding combatting antisemitism. —Arab News

‘No Ukraine response on proposal for more talks’

MOSCOW: Russia says it has yet to receive a response from Ukraine over its proposal to hold another round of ceasefire talks in Istanbul next week, as Turkiye’s president urged the warring sides not to “close the door” to dialogue.

Moscow said earlier this week it wanted to hold new talks with Ukraine in the Turkish city on June 2 to present a memorandum that would outline what it referred to as the key elements for “overcoming the root causes” of the war. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday that so far Moscow has not received a reply from Kyiv.

When asked to comment on Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha’s suggestion that Russia should immediately hand over the memorandum, Peskov dismissed the idea as “non-constructive”. “Here, you have to either confirm your readiness to continue negotiations or do the opposite,” Peskov said.

Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov said on Wednesday that Kyiv had already submitted its memorandum on a potential settlement and called on Russia to produce its version

immediately, rather than waiting until next week, saying that the meeting would not yield results without it. Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry spokesman, Heorhii Tykhyi, said on X on Thursday that Russia’s hesitancy to share its plan suggests that it was “likely filled with unrealistic ultimatums”.

“They are afraid of revealing that they are stalling the peace process,” Tykhyi said. Officials from both sides met in Istanbul on May 16, their first direct talks in more than three years, but the encounter failed to yield a breakthrough, though the exchange of 1,000 prisoners of war was agreed and then completed in recent days.

The Russian delegation to the second round of talks with Ukraine in Istanbul will be the same as for the first round, the TASS news cited Russia’s foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying on Thursday. The Russian delegation for the first round of direct talks included President Vladimir Putin’s aide Vladimir Medinsky, ambassador-at-large Rodion Miroshnik and senior military and intelligence officials.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had slammed the composition of Moscow’s team in the first round, saying it was a “sign of disrespect” as it was a junior delegation that was not empowered to sign a ceasefire. “Russia once again demonstrated that it does not intend to end the war,” Zelenskyy said on X. “We expect a clear and strong response from partners.”

But Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said the recent momentum for talks was an opportunity to reach lasting peace. “The road to a resolution goes through more dialogue, more diplomacy. We are using all our diplomatic power and potential for peace,” he told reporters on Thursday, according to his office.

“During the course of each of our meetings, we have reminded our interlocutors that they should not pass up this opportunity,” Erdogan said, adding that “extinguishing this huge fire in our region ... is a humanitarian duty.” In Ukraine, local authorities said at least five people were killed across the country after Russia fired 90 drones overnight. — Aljazeera

PM, Tajikistan’s leader

(Continued from Page 1)

On peaceful resolution of Tajik-Kyrgyz border dispute, the Prime Minister felicitated the President on this milestone and appreciated the President’s prudence and wisdom in resolving the issue through peaceful means. The Prime Minister hoped that this historical development would usher in a new era of cooperation and progress in the region. The two leaders expressed satisfaction on cooperation at the multilateral fora, including at the UN, OIC, SCO and ECO and reaffirmed their resolve to continue collaboration on global and regional issues of common interest.

The Prime Minister, reaffirming Pakistan’s historical and cordial ties with Tajikistan, underscored the importance Pakistan attaches to ongoing structured and multifaceted engagement with Tajikistan, for mutual gains. The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan’s commitment to strengthening connectivity linkages with the Central Asian region. Towards that end, he highlighted China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

as a linchpin of Pakistan’s connectivity with the region. The Prime Minister also briefed the President on the latest situation in the South Asian region. The Prime Minister underscored that our region could not afford India’s irresponsible and unlawful actions since 7 May 2025, which amounted to acts of war and violation of the UN Charter and international law. The Prime Minister urged the international community to hold India accountable, reiterating that Pakistan desires peace, but will defend its sovereignty with full resolve if challenged.

He also underscored that the resolution of Jammu & Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions, remains fundamental to securing lasting peace in the region. In response, President Emomali said that as a staunch friend of Pakistan, he too was very worried at the events of early May, adding that he would always promote peace and stability in the region. He added that he was deeply impressed by the Prime Minister’s remarkable leadership that

was critical to the restoration of peace and security in the region.

President Emomali Rahmon reaffirmed Tajikistan’s desire for further intensifying bilateral cooperation in all fields, terming Pakistan as a trusted partner. Noting regular high-level exchanges, he underlined the importance of closer collaboration in the areas of science and technology, agriculture, industry, hydro power generation, and tourism.

The Prime Minister appreciated Tajikistan’s leadership role in Water Diplomacy and congratulated the President of Tajikistan for successful organization of international events including the International High-Level Conference on Glaciers’ Preservation (ICGP) on 29-31 May 2025, in Dushanbe.

The Prime Minister extended a cordial invitation to President Rahmon for an official visit to Islamabad to continue strategic dialogue and deepen the multifaceted partnership. President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon also hosted a special reception in honor of Prime Minister Sharif.

Dar in HK for signing of IOMed

HONG KONG (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday arrived here for the signing ceremony of the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed).

Deputy Secretary for Justice for Hong Kong Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi, and Consul General of Pakistan to Hong Kong Riaz Ahmed Sheikh received the deputy prime minister at the airport in Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China.

During the two-day visit, DPM Dar will also hold several bilateral engagements on the sidelines of the signing ceremony. Pakistan has joined the IOMed as one of its founding members. Pakistan remains strongly supportive of the aims and objectives of IOMed, recognizing its potential for mediation as well as peaceful and pacific settlement of international disputes.

Rivalry claims three lives in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: At least three people were killed when unidentified assailants opened fire on a car in Tehkal area of Peshawar on Thursday.

Police said, the incident took place within the jurisdiction of Tehkal Police Station, near Spin Jamaat and close to the Palosai Road zoo area. The victims were traveling in a car when unknown gunmen fired at them.

The deceased have been identified as Sameen Jan, son of Safdar, aged 68, Hussain Maab, son of Abdul Mateen, aged 40—both residents of Regi and Waqar, aged 30, a resident of Jamrud. Following the incident, DSP Town Asif Sharif, SHO Tehkal Police Station Saddam Khan, and other investigation officers reached the crime scene.

Police collected empty bullet shells and other forensic evidence. The bodies were shifted to KTH for medical and legal procedures. Police said initial investigation suggested that an old rivalry could be the motive behind shooting.